BBC

HAPPY AND GLORIOUS

We tell the story of the British National Anthem

KORNGOLD'S GENIUS

His dramatic life, from prodigy to movie great

music

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BBC RADIO 3
Full June listings inside
See p100

BBC music MAGAZINE AWARDS 2022

Winners Revealed!

Patricia Kopatchinskaja takes the Concerto prize with her dazzling violin showcase

Unfinished works

Should we try to guess what might have been?

Brahms's Third

The best recordings of his most enigmatic symphony

Pavel Haas Quartet

We celebrate 20 years of the inspiring Czech foursome

100 reviews by the world's finest critics

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Psappha

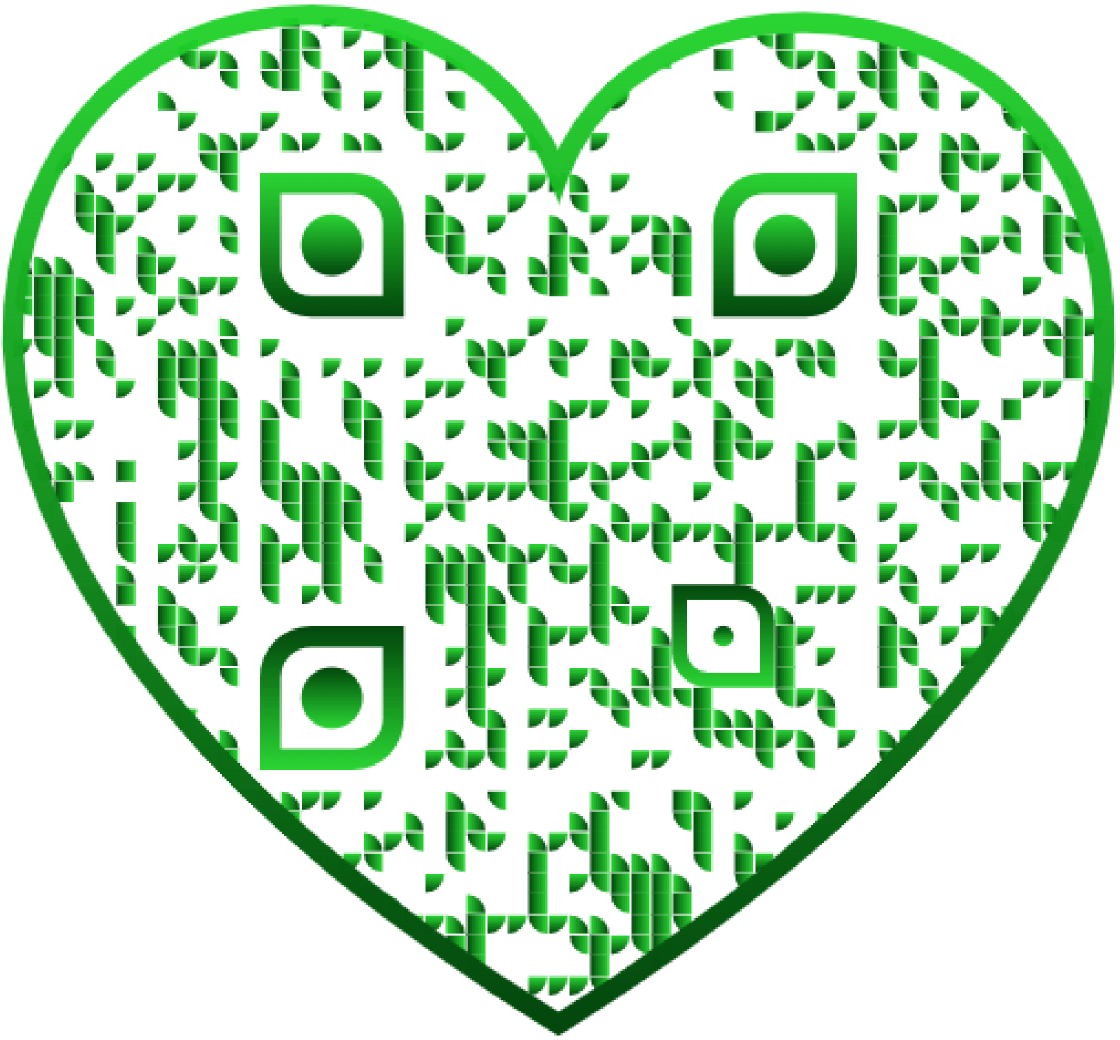
The new music group turns 30

Richard Morrison

Is the Queen a music lover?

Florence Price

The composer's historic debut



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Welcome

It is with great pleasure that we announce the recipients of this year's BBC Music Magazine Awards. After two seasons of disruptive lockdowns, full-capacity celebrations have returned in 2022, and with them the opportunity to honour a host of outstanding artists, many of whom made their winning recordings during those difficult pandemic months.

This year, nine of our eleven Awards categories have been put to a public vote, including, for the first time, the Premiere and Newcomer Awards, which go respectively to tenor Freddie De Tommaso for *Passione*, and husband-and-wife duo Tom Poster and Elena Urioste for their highly creative *The Jukebox Album*.

Recording of the Year, meanwhile, could not have gone to a more worthy beneficiary in Igor Levit, whose Sony album *On DSCH* features two monumental works of the piano repertoire, Shostakovich's 24 Preludes and Fugues and Ronald Stevenson's *Passacaglia on DSCH*. While the Shostakovich is a deeply personal answer to repression and censorship, the Stevenson is 'the most international piece I know,' according to Levit, capable of transcending cultures and borders. Together, the works represent a fitting message for our times, says the pianist: 'music that tells us of our responsibility towards the world'. Turn to page 26 to read about all this year's winning artists.

Charlotte Smith *Editor*

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS

Andrew Green
Writer and broadcaster
'Scholars have offered a multiplicity of clues as to the mysterious origins of the British National Anthem. So where do things stand in this year of celebration for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee?' ***Page 42***

David Threasher
Writer and editor
'I've always been fascinated by unfinished music and the people who complete it, bringing to life fragments that would otherwise remain frozen in time, so it's been great fun to write about some of my favourites.' ***Page 48***

Jessica Duchen
Author and librettist
'I first wrote about Korngold at university in 1986, then in a book ten years later. "Korngold? Who's he?" everyone asked. Now the composer is a virtually a household name. I hope you'll love him as much as I do.' ***Page 60***

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June reviews

Your guide to the best new recordings and books

The Castalian String Quartet

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Between Two Worlds
Castalian String Quartet
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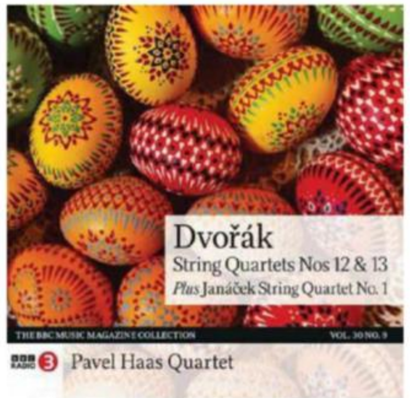
ON YOUR COVER CD

See the CD booklet notes for full track details

Czech masterpieces, but with an American tinge

Julian Haylock introduces string quartets by Dvořák and Janáček, performed by the Pavel Haas Quartet



Dvořák

String Quartet No. 12 in F major, Op. 96 'American'; No. 13 in G major, Op. 106

Janáček

String Quartet No. 1, 'The Kreutzer Sonata'

Artists
Pavel Haas Quartet:
Veronika Jarůšková (violin)
Eva Karová (violin)
Pavel Nikl (viola)
Peter Jarůšek (cello)

To download the inlay details for our cover CDs each month, visit **classical-music.com/issues**

A Czech affair: the Pavel Haas Quartet play works from their home country

MARCO BORGGREVE, GETTY

This month's cover disc features three of the finest string quartets from the Czecho-Slovak tradition. Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904) was one of the distinguished group of nationalist composers who rose to fame during the second half of the 19th century – others included Grieg (Norway), Musorgsky (Russia), Nielsen (Denmark) and Sibelius (Finland). The great conductor Hans von Bülow hit the nail on the head when he described Dvořák as 'the peasant in a frock-coat', for despite becoming one of the most popular figures in classical music, he was at his happiest enjoying a few beers at a local tavern with his chums and indulging his passion for steam locomotives.

During the early 1890s, Dvořák spent three years based in the United States at the invitation of millionairess Jeannette Thurber, who wanted him to help establish a definitive American school of composers at the National Conservatory she had recently founded (see 'When Harry met Antonín', right). He received a small fortune in compensation, but felt dreadfully homesick at times. This can be sensed in the three most famous scores he produced at this time: the 'New World' Symphony, Cello Concerto, and 'American' String Quartet (No. 12), which opens our cover disc. Here, Dvořák ingeniously employs modal and pentatonic (five-note folk style) melodies to suggest an outdoor, folksong quality that manages to sound indelibly Czecho-Slovak and popular-American at the same time.

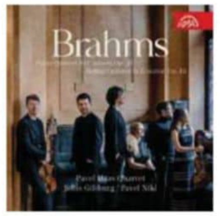
Returning to the homeland in May 1895, Dvořák hit a period of writer's block, although according to a letter to his close friend Alois Gobl he was thoroughly enjoying taking some time out. 'I am basking in God's nature and am contentedly idle,' he reported. 'I am not doing anything, which will probably surprise you, but it is true, it really is. I'm just lazing around and haven't touched my pen.' Having recalibrated his creative energies, Dvořák celebrated in style with his G major String Quartet (No. 13), a blazing masterpiece that celebrates the medium's sonic and expressive potential.

Late flourish

Like Dvořák, Leoš Janáček (1854-1928) struggled initially to make his voice heard over the clamour of established Western European classical celebrities. He came to know Dvořák well enough to go on a walking holiday with him during the summer of 1877, and it was at this time that some of his freshest inspiration can be heard in the unashamedly tuneful and Dvořákian *Suite* and *Idyll*, both for string orchestra. It was only after discovering the indigenous folk music of his Moravian homeland during the 1880s that Janáček's distinctive style began to emerge, most notably in the groundbreaking 'speech-melody' of his opera *Jenůfa*, premiered in Brno in 1904.

By 1923, when Janáček composed the first of his two string quartets, inspired by Tolstoy's 1889 novella *The Kreutzer Sonata* (in response to a request from the Bohemian Quartet), he was at the height of his powers. In full creative flow, he completed the work in just over a fortnight, yet his marital life was distinctly strained. On the one hand, he continued sharing a house with his estranged wife, and on the other he was idealistically in love, writing over 700 letters to Kamila Stösslová, a married woman little more than half his age whom he first met in 1917 while on holiday at the spa resort of Luhačovice. Janáček's love went unrequited, but the mesmerising effect Kamila had on the composer inspired a flurry of late music, of which the 'Kreutzer Sonata' Quartet was the first major outcome.

Further listening



In their latest recording, the ***Pavel Haas*** join forces with pianist Boris Giltburg and former member Pavel Nikl for Brahms piano and string quintets *(Supraphon SU 43062)*.

Try also the Pavel Haas's BBC Music Magazine Award-winning debut recording from 2006, coupling the second string quartets by ***Janáček*** and ***Haas*** *(Supraphon SU 38772)*.

For a broader ***Dvořák*** perspective, there's the Stamitz Quartet's ten-disc set of his complete works for string quartet *(Brilliant Classics 95498)*.

When Harry met Antonín
Dvořák's voice of America

New arrivals: Dvořák with his family in New York

Jeannette Thurber didn't hold back when urging Dvořák to move across the Atlantic and start a new life in the US – as well as offering a salary at the National Conservatory that was roughly 25 times what he was currently on, she also promised that he would be teaching only the most talented pupils. Even so, the composer still hesitated, such was his attachment to his homeland.

Arriving in New York in September 1892, Dvořák would remain in the US for two-and-a-half years, a stay that left him richer not just in pocket but culturally too. Among those whom he met at the National Conservatory was the talented African-American student Harry Burleigh (left), a baritone and double-bassist who would himself go on to become a significant composer. 'While I was never a student of Dvořák, I was constantly associated with him,' wrote Burleigh later. 'I sang our Negro songs for him very often and, before he wrote his own themes, he filled himself with the spirit of the old Spirituals.'

Dvořák told journalist James Creelman that 'I am now satisfied that the future music in this country must be founded upon what are called negro melodies… These beautiful and varied themes are the product of the soil.' Though spirituals are not directly quoted in Dvořák's 'American' Quartet – a work largely influenced by the American landscape – they did, according to Burleigh, influence the flat sevenths and syncopation of the 'New World' Symphony.

Have your say…

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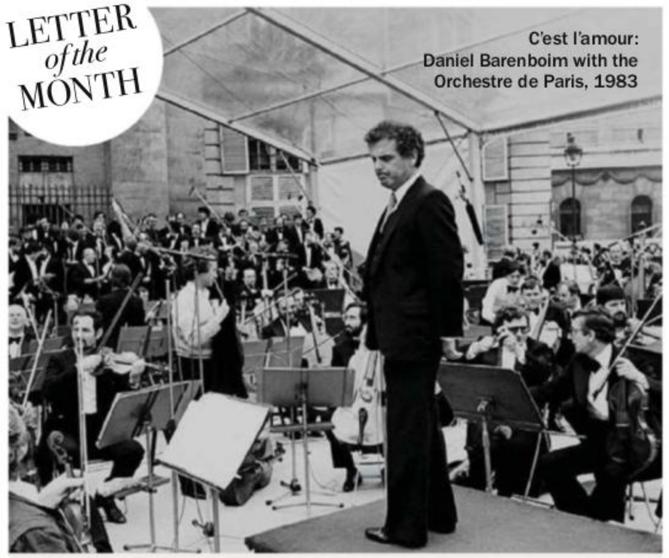
LETTER of the MONTH


C'est l'amour: Daniel Barenboim with the Orchestre de Paris, 1983

Parisian hero

Your splendid feature about Daniel Barenboim (April) reminded me of his time with the Orchestre de Paris, which was in a sorry state when he took over in 1975. He brought them up to scratch, invited Arthur Oldham over to create a Chorus, involved the first desks in participating as soloists, created a series of chamber concerts and set up a junior orchestra headed by Mstislav Rostropovich. He even held a referendum among the audience one day about the starting time of concerts – at the time, 9.30 pm was frequent, so that the public could have a proper dinner but neglecting those from the suburbs who needed trains to get home. We voted for 8pm. It wasn't without friction, like the time when he insisted on Wagner tubas being used for a Bruckner symphony. When Barenboim left in 1989, the orchestra was among the top three in Paris.
Brian Edmonds, *Paris, France*

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GETTY, BRIDGEMAN

Hymns of greatness

It was good to read the passing reference to Vaughan Williams's work as musical editor of the *English Hymnal* (May issue). In some respects this has left a greater legacy across the land than many of his published and performed works. The *English Hymnal,* published in 1906, claimed to be a 'broad church' hymn book but it soon became clear that it appealed by and large to the high church faction. Its largely musically revised version of 1933, also under the aegis of VW, appeared at what was probably the high point of the Anglo-Catholic revival. In 1925 VW, in response to the demand for a truly broad-church hymn book, was responsible for the editing of *Songs of Praise*. Including, for the first time, 'Morning has broken', it became popular in non-church schools in the days when every day started with a hymn. VW is largely responsible for generations of boys, girls, men and women learning the pleasures of singing.
Stuart Edwards, *Morecambe*

Putin's puppet

In response to Linda Edmondson (Letters, May issue), while I certainly agree that the majority of Russian musicians performing in the West should not be ostracised, I think that Valery Gergiev is a special case and that it is not 'virtue signalling' to call him out as a particular beneficiary of Vladimir Putin's friendship. I recommend that she watch a YouTube video, posted on 12 April by Alexei Navalny's channel, which details Gergiev's well-documented political support for Putin, the questionable management of his Mariinsky foundation and the conductor's extensive property dealings.
Tim Clarke, *Reading*

Russian response

Stopping concerts of Russian music has more to do with the cancel culture than with the untold brutality in the Ukraine. It is worth recollecting those Russian composers who suffered under various forms of Russian oppression. Rachmaninov only just escaped with his life, ultimately to the US, in 1917. Stravinsky too was a refugee in the US, as Glazunov effectively became in France. Prokofiev died the same day as Stalin in obscure penury, as his first wife slaved in the Gulag. Shostakovich told Stravinsky that he had never known not being afraid. A similar list could be given regarding performers. So let us ring out with glorious Russian music as an antidote to their current barbarism.
Jonathan Noble, *via email*

Naval, not novel

I expect I'm one of many annoying correspondents to point out that Hardy's Monument near Dorchester (May issue) does not commemorate Thomas Hardy the poet and novelist, but Admiral Sir Thomas Masterman Hardy, who gave Lord Nelson his final kiss. Don't worry, you're not the first to spread the confusion, and you won't be the last.
John Chandler, *Gloucester*

The editor replies:
Not annoying at all! We are grateful for you giving us the chance to correct ourselves, though you are right that others have done likewise...

Day of Resurrection

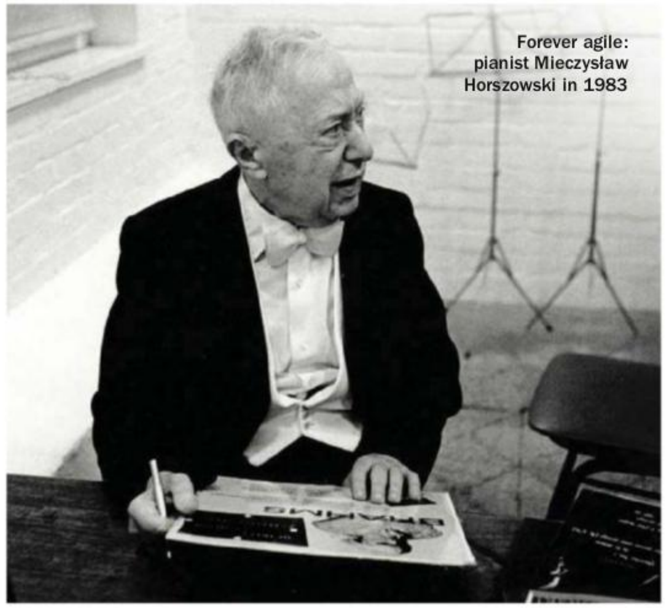
Like Barry Bloxham (Letters, May), I too was at Stokowski's never-to-be-forgotten concert of Mahler's 'Resurrection' Symphony in 1963, the work's first ever performance at a BBC Prom concert. The sense of occasion, excitement, everyone being swept along with the music and Stokowski's great and noble conducting ensured that, after the overwhelming response by the Prommers at the end, who could resist agreeing with his asking whether we would like to hear (again!) the final part of the music? The applause after the 'extra' music was even more ecstatic!
Gordon Dent, *Chelmsford*

Bach for more

Generally, I agree that augmenting a programme with an encore (April issue) can be both 'de trop' and detrimental to the effect already designed to be (hopefully) achieved. One of the only exceptions that I can think of was at the end of the final instalment of Alfred Brendel's magisterial traversal of the Beethoven piano sonatas in the late 1990s at the Royal Festival Hall. As we were tentatively readjusting to reality after the transcendent ending of Op. 111, Brendel sat back down at the piano. 'Oh NO!' exclaimed the gentleman next to me. However, the encore that Brendel chose to play was a chorale prelude by Bach. Utterly tranquil, utterly pure, utterly sublime and surely the only possible envoi to the 'falling upwards' end to his Beethoven Sonata cycle.
James Argles, *London*

Energetic at 80

Your article about musical nonagenarians (March) brought back memories of my own experience with pianist Mieczysław Horszowski. Back in the late-1970s I was the recording engineer for Horszowski's Vanguard recording of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* Book 1. Horszowski was in his mid-80s at the time but still full of energy. The sessions were very relaxed and after recording for a while, he would come into the control room and discuss what he had done with producer Robert Lurie, with the conversations entirely in French, a language with which they were both fluent. During breaks between sessions, he would sometimes sit at the piano and play Rachmaninov, just to clear the air I imagine.
Charles Repka, *East Windsor, NJ, US*


Forever agile: pianist Mieczysław Horszowski in 1983

Check the score

Challenging a reviewer's opinion is always a perilous exercise and usually ill-advised, but sometimes inaccuracies or misconceptions need to be pointed out, especially when they're confidently presented as the result of informed scholarship, as Roger Nichols does in his review of Alina Ibragimova's and Cédric Tiberghien's Mendelssohn violin sonatas (April issue): '...in the middle movement of the F minor Sonata, Alina Ibragimova for some reason alters the first two notes of her entry, which should echo the piano's'. I don't know what edition Roger has on his shelves, but the reason is clear in the appendix to the 2009 Barenreiter Edition which the artists and I were using in the sessions: 'Bar 10, quavers in vln c''-ab' altered in another hand to eb'-eb''. Whether or not Roger agrees with the authenticity of the other 'hand', the artists' decision to follow it shouldn't be inferred to be a mistake or oversight.
Andrew Keener, *Independent Recording Producer, New Malden*

Railroad Grieg

Regarding *Trains of Thought* (March issue), my father was a railroader, as am I, and he had a love of classical music, as do I. Our early 78s were well worn but none so much as Grieg's 'In the Hall of the Mountain King' which I learned from my father to imagine as a freight train starting and slowly struggling up a steep mountain grade, reaching the crest, and then accelerating down the other side, losing its airbrakes, whistling frantically and crashing at the bottom of the hill. Living in a railroad town (Altoona, PA) at the foot of the Allegheny Mountains in those days when the music of the railway industry was continuous made it easy to visualise that part of the *Peer Gynt* Suite. Think of this scenario the next time you hear it.
Robert Watson, *Audubon, PA, US*

World class

In Jeremy Pound's article on Llangollen (April), the Pavarotti Trophy was twice referred to as being awarded to 'Choir of the Year'. Please note, the title is, in fact, Cor Y Byd, which means 'Choir of the World'. It is awarded annually, however, and I am sure I have made the same mistake myself.
Peter Sanham, *via email*

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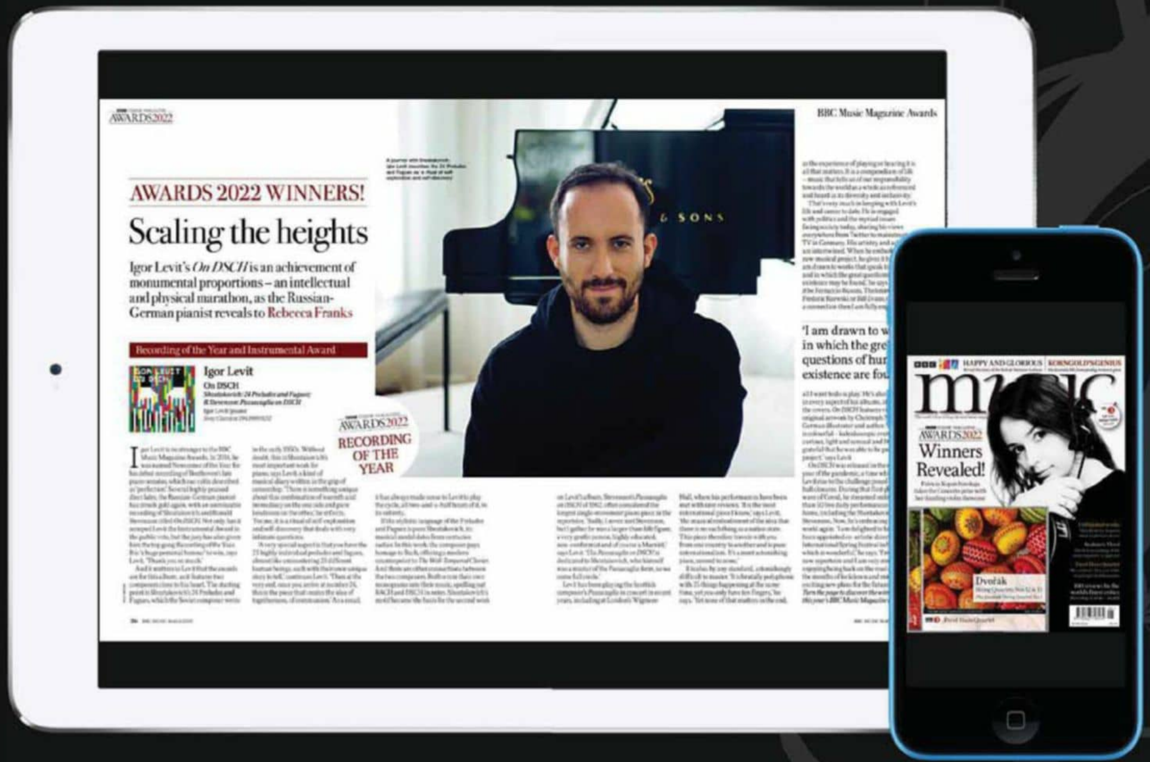

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BBC music MAGAZINE

The*full*score

Our pick of the month's news, views and interviews

Young stars shine in blazing Carl Nielsen Competition

Players from Estonia, Ukraine and Italy take top prizes in composer's home city

Danish delight: (left to right) Bohdan Luts, Hans Christian Aavik, Alberto Navarra and Oleg Shebeta-Dragan triumph in Odense

MORTEN KJÆRGAARD

Musicians from three European countries have triumphed at the Carl Nielsen International Competition 2022, each winning significant cash prizes, recording deals and the opportunity to perform with a leading Nordic orchestra… not to mention the kudos of success at one of the most prestigious events of its kind.

Sharing first prize in the violin competition were the Estonian Hans Christian Aavik, 23, and 17-year-old Ukrainian Bohdan Luts, while Ukraine also enjoyed victory in the clarinet competition, won by Oleg Shebeta-Dragan, 27. The flute competition was won by the 24-year-old Italian Alberto Navarra.

The three instrumental categories at the Nielsen Competition derive from the three concertos written by the Danish composer – who hailed from near Odense, the city in which the event is held – and each of the finalists is required to perform a Nielsen concerto plus a major work for soloist and orchestra by another composer. In the past, the instruments were showcased in separate competitions in yearly rotation, but in 2019 the three elements were brought together into one larger triennial celebration. The competition itself dates back to 1980, when it was founded to promote the composer's music. It was initially just for violinists before organists were invited to join the party in 1986, followed by clarinettists in 1997 and flautists in 1998 – the organ category was dropped in 2011.

> 'The young musicians have shown genuine support for each other'

Reflecting on this year's event, competition president and leading violinist Nikolaj Szeps-Znaider commented that it 'has exceeded all our expectations in many ways, first and foremost for the fact that we have four outstanding first prize winners of exceptional musicality and individuality. Equally important has been the extraordinary sense of "togetherness" which we have seen and felt among the competitors – young musicians who have shown genuine warmth and support for each other both on- and off-stage.'

With further prizes awarded for second and third place in each category and for disciplines such as performing a work specially commissioned for the competition and constructing an imaginative programme around Nielsen's music, success at the Nielsen Competition is by no means just about winning the final. And for many of the participants, a bright future often lies in store. When Znaider himself won in 1992, for instance, his fellow finalists included Jennifer Koh and Pekka Kuusisto, both now established as major international soloists. Readers of last month's *BBC Music Magazine*, meanwhile, may have noticed a five-star review for a recording of Nielsen and Sibelius violin concertos by Johan Dalene, a winner at the 2019 competition.

A little light music: Quatuor Bregovic wax lyrical in Stockholm

An occasion of burning passions and flickering emotion

Here's an image to have any company fire officer waking up in a cold sweat. Though concerts by candlelight have long been a part of the classical music scene, the Quatuor Bregovic took things to a new level for their recent performance at Café Högloftet in Skansen, Stockholm by getting up close and personal not just with the audience but with the candlles themselves. The concert was one of a series in the Swedish capital over late March and early April in which the pleasant odour of melting wax was accompanied by the strains of composers such as Vivaldi, John Williams and, in this instance, Queen. We hope that a concert of works by George Frideric Candle is also on the agenda…

THE MONTH IN NUMBERS

20,000,000

… recently sown flowers growing to a new soundtrack by Erland Cooper at the Tower of London (above).

6

… Russian and two Belarusian pianists are set to take part in the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in June.

367

… years of the world's oldest choral music festival, as the Clergy Support Trust Festival resumes after a two-year pandemic break.

41

… trees near Schermerhorn Symphony Center in Nashville to be cut down to reduce damage caused by 150,000 roosting purple martins.

Sound Bites

Staying with Auntie: conductor Sakari Oramo

Extra Oramo

Sakari Oramo is to remain as chief conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra until at least 2026. The Finn, who has been with the ensemble since 2013 and has conducted the Last Night of the Proms on five occasions, says he is 'very happy and beyond excited' to have extended his contract, adding that 'on the musical, artistic and human level, I couldn't imagine any better environment than this musical family'.

Would Pekka…?

Another Finn to have recently signed on the dotted line is the violinist Pekka Kuusisto, who has been announced as the new principal guest conductor and artistic co-director of the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra from the beginning of the 2023/24 season. This is the first official conducting post for Kuusisto, 45, who is highly regarded for his creative and imaginative approach as a performer.

Tchaikovsky dumped

The International Tchaikovsky Competition has been expelled from the World Federation of International Music Competitions (WFIMC) in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The multi-instrumental competition, whose list of past winners includes pianist Vladimir Ashkenazy, violinist Gidon Kremer and soprano Deborah Voigt, enjoys strong support from Vladimir Putin, a statement from whom appears on the front page of its website.

Doleful note

The restoration of a church in Sunderland has unearthed a note written by an orphaned choirboy written 125 years ago. In the note, dated 11 August 1897 and found stuffed down the side of a pew, 13-year-old William Elliot asks that 'whoever you are that finds this paper don't tear it up or throw it away… keep it in remembrance of me.'

GETTY, BENJAMIN EALOVEGA

Rising Stars

Three to look out for...

Yoav Levanon *Pianist*

Born: Tel Aviv, Israel
Career highlight: Performing Chopin's First Piano Concerto at the Teatro di San Carlo in Naples when I was 11, my first solo recital at the Verbier Festival, and signing with HarrisonParrot Management. I'm also really excited to release my first album, *A Monument to Beethoven*, this year with Warner Classics.
Musical heroes: I'm honoured to be working with two of them: pianists Murray Perahia and András Schiff. Their dedication to exploring and attention to detail is inspiring.
Dream concert: A concert signalling the end of the Covid pandemic, streamed worldwide and uniting millions of people in celebration.

Samuel Mariño *Male soprano*

Born: Caracas, Venezuela
Career highlight: My first appearance in Handel's *Berenice* at the Halle Handel Festival. The applause was huge. After I did an improvised high note, people started screaming and clapping before I'd even finished the aria. Just thinking about it still gives me goosebumps!
Musical hero: Maria Callas wanted to show a different way of singing opera. Just as she did, I want to be open to the audience and give a multi-dimensional experience of listening to music.
Dream concert: A multicultural concert, uniting different artforms and cultures from different communities.

Olivia Clarke *Conductor*

Born: London, UK
Career highlight: When conductor Martyn Brabbins offered me the ENO Mackerras Fellowship, he had to ask me to stop screaming down the phone into his ear. Another highlight was when the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra asked me to be one of its new assistant conductors.
Musical heroes: I am always most inspired by my colleagues in rehearsal. When you first find those unexpected spine-tingling moments together is an unbeatable feeling.
Dream concert: One in which a truly diverse spectrum of people can be seen throughout the concert hall – and it feels normal. That includes the audience, musicians, creative team and composers.

TIMEPIECE This month in history

JUNE 1933

Florence Price's Symphony makes history in Chicago

'I have two handicaps – those of sex and race. I am a woman; and I have some Negro blood in my veins.' Florence Price's assessment of her standing as a classical composer was all too accurate. Born in 1887 in Little Rock, Arkansas, into a mixed-race family of African-American descent, she spent much of her professional life grappling with what one writer has called the 'dangerous mélange of segregation, Jim Crow laws, entrenched racism and sexism' in post-Civil War American society.

Price's family circumstances were, however, better than those of most other African-Americans. Her father was a successful dentist, at a period when the number of Black dentists in the entire US barely reached double figures. Her mother was a pianist and music teacher, and the family lived in a generously appointed home with its own reading room, a grand piano and elegant furniture. By the age of four, Florence had played her first piano recital, and by eleven her first composition was published. Hers was by any standards a comfortable, privileged childhood.

And yet the racist wolf continued to maraud in society at large. To avoid it, Price's mother took special measures when Florence went to study organ and piano at the New England Conservatory in Boston. 'My grandmother didn't want my mother to be a Negro,' one of Price's daughters later commented. 'So when she took her to Boston, she rented an expensive apartment with a maid and forced my mother to say her birthplace was not Little Rock but Mexico.'

Price flourished at college, and although she taught successfully after graduating in 1906 and had more pieces published, the path ahead was often rocky. For a time, after divorcing her abusive first husband, Thomas, in 1931, she worked as a cinema organist and wrote radio jingles to support two children as a single mother.

Her breakthrough finally came two years later, in 1933, when her Symphony No. 1 in E minor was premiered by the prestigious Chicago Symphony Orchestra – the first symphony by a Black woman to be performed by a major American orchestra. Price had completed the work a year earlier, when it won the $500 first prize in a competition sponsored by the National Association for Negro Musicians.

The concert at the Auditorium Theatre on 15 June was part of the Century of Progress exposition at the Chicago World's Fair, and was billed 'The Negro in Music'. Price's symphony shared the programme with works by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Harry T Burleigh, Roland Hayes and – bizarrely – John Powell, who held white supremacist views.

Price's symphony drew glowing accolades from the critics, one of whom experienced a 'feeling of awe' at

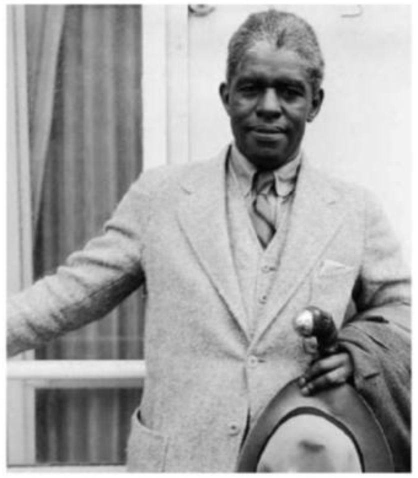
Notable First: (far left) Florence Price, whose Symphony was conducted by Frederick Stock (left); (below) fellow composer Roland Hayes

witnessing 'the beautiful, harmonious strains of a composition by a Race woman' performed by 'an aggregation of master musicians of the white race', under the German conductor Frederick Stock, who had personally championed the piece. The Symphony was 'a faultless work', the *Chicago Daily News* reported, 'worthy of a place in the regular symphonic repertory'. Old prejudices die hard, however, and Price's First Symphony fell into obscurity in the decades following her death in 1953.

The #MeToo and Black Lives Matter movements have, though, recently

> The Symphony was 'a faultless work', reported the *Chicago Daily News*

prompted a timely reappraisal of Price's place in American music history. Recent recordings of the First Symphony – conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin's with the Philadelphia Orchestra, in particular – have underlined its warmly Dvořákian palette and the rich peppering of African-American melodic influences. 'We are waking up to the fact pregnant with possibilities that we already have a folk music in the Negro spirituals,' Price once wrote. 'It is simple heart music and therefore powerful.' ***Terry Blain***



GETTY, NIR SLAKMAN, OLIVIER ALLARD, CSO ARCHIVES

Controversial lead: actor Roscoe Arbuckle

Also in June 1933

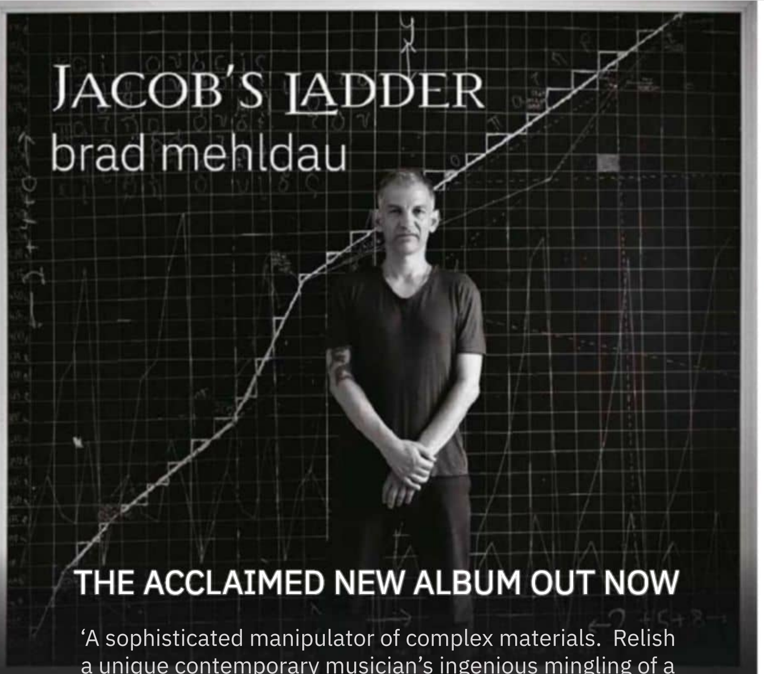
4th: Boasting Europe's most powerful transmitter, **Radio Luxembourg** launches its English language service. This does not go down well with the BBC, which has so far enjoyed a monopoly in the UK, and complaints are soon raised that Radio Luxembourg is pirating frequencies.

6th: The first **drive-in movie theatre** opens in Pennsauken, New Jersey, US. It is the brainchild of Richard Hollingshead, who charges 25 cents per car and 25 cents per person. The first ever film shown at the Camden Drive-In is *Wives Beware*, a British comedy directed by Fred Niblo and starring Adolphe Menjou and Margaret Bannerman.

7th: Kurt Weill and **Bertolt Brecht**'s *Seven Deadly Sins* receives its world premiere at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, with a cast including Lotte Lenya and Tilly Losch. As it is performed in Weill and Brecht's own language, their riotous 'sung ballet' leaves much of its audience perplexed, though German speakers give it the thumbs up.

22nd: Joseph Canteloube's *Vercingétorix* is performed for the first time at the Paris Opera, with the star tenor Georges Thill in the title role. The opera, which tells the story of the chief of the Arverni tribe who led the Gauls in an unsuccessful revolution against Julius Caesar, does not prove a great success and the production is brought to an end after just nine performances.

29th: The US actor, director and screenwriter **Roscoe 'Fatty' Arbuckle** dies of a heart attack at the age of 46 in New York. Famous for silent films such as *Coney Island*, *Good Night, Nurse!* and *The Butcher Boy*, he was also an important mentor to actors including Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton. In 1921, Arbuckle was tried three times for the rape and manslaughter of actress Virginia Rappe, and though he was acquitted, the allegations overshadowed his later career.



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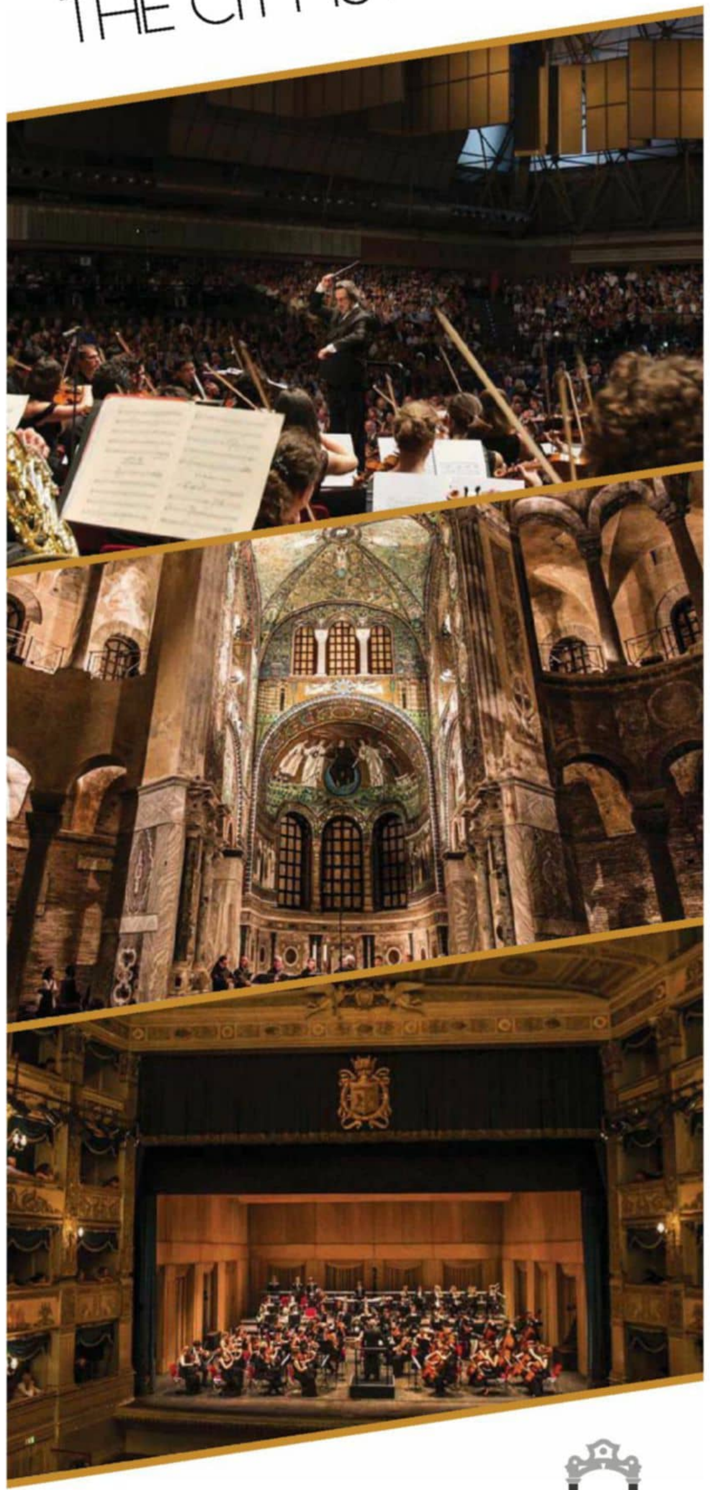
THE CITY IS A STAGE



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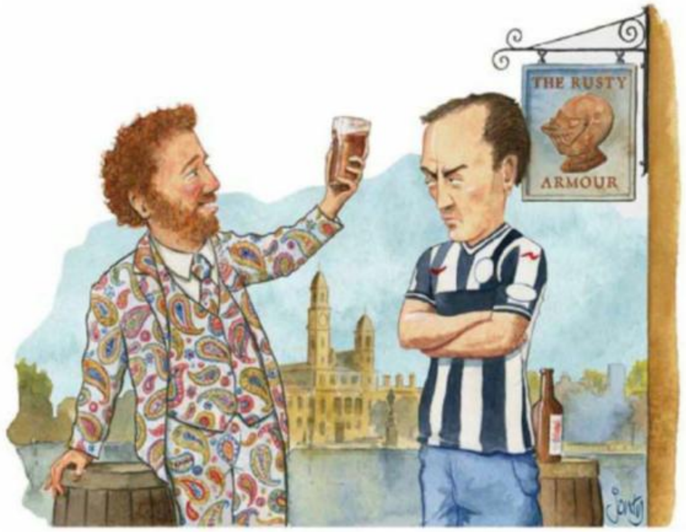


ILLUSTRATION: JONTY CLARK

Paisley refit gives MacScagni a Scottish twist

As we go to press, final rehearsals are underway for an intriguing new take on Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana* by Paisley Opera. Called *A Paisley Kiss* and staged in the Scottish company's hometown, the Sicily-based opera's libretto has been translated into the local dialect and, we are told, features one or two unlikely twists to the plot. Though the *BBC Music* editorial team is comprised largely of soft English southerners (plus an Australian), even we can hazard a guess as to what a 'Paisley Kiss' might be. If it has any similarity to its equivalent in nearby Glasgow, it is anything but romantic...

DÉJÀ VU

History just keeps on repeating itself...

Roger Wright (left), former controller of Radio 3 and the BBC Proms, has revealed that, at 65, he has taken up the double bass. Though his main aim is to raise funds for Disasters Emergency Committee (see justgiving.com/fundraising/Roger-Wright2), the CEO of Britten Pears Arts says he does have plans to take his exams. He is not the first well-known face to show a fondness for the big beast of the string section...

Surely the most famous double bass in movie history is the three-quarter-sized instrument lugged around by **Jack Lemmon** as Jerry/Daphne in 1959's *Some Like It Hot*. When it came to scenes in which he had to pluck a few notes, the US actor needed little training as he could play the bass in real life – he was also a talented pianist. Among those very familiar with Lemmon's performance is **Mark Kermode**, the film critic and radio broadcaster. When not dispensing wisdom about the silver screen, Kermode is often to be seen strutting his stuff as the double bassist of skiffle band The Dodge Brothers. The broadcaster, author and columnist **Miles Kington** was also to be seen playing the double bass for a band, in his case the cabaret group Instant Sunshine. Among double bassists to have been lost along the way, meanwhile, are singer **Thom Yorke**, who played the low notes in his school orchestra before going on to find fame with rock group Radiohead, and England football goalie **David James** who, also at school, chose to downsize to the cello instead, eventually giving that up as well.

MEET THE COMPOSER

Anne Dudley

Basic approach: 'I'm not afraid to do something quite simple'

As a session player, arranger and founder member of synth pop group The Art of Noise in the 1980s and an Oscar-winning film composer for *The Full Monty*, Anne Dudley has enjoyed a career of both variety and success. Her new album *Crossing the Bar* pairs original pieces for piano and strings with folk song arrangements.

I had some great teachers. I remember Miss Felix very fondly from my primary school days. She discovered I had perfect pitch and got very excited. There were some wonderful female role models, too. Elisabeth Lutyens was one of the first women to ever score a film – she worked on the Hammer Horror movies. I remember finding out about her and thinking, 'Oh, so women can write music.'

Writing music for commercials was instrumental for me becoming a composer. It was a fantastic discipline in terms of telling a story and being able to understand how music and film can work together.

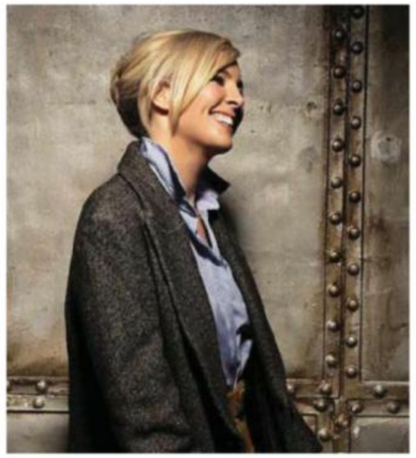
I let my hands inspire me. I play the piano and start finding some notes; you've got quite a lot of choice on a great big grand piano. Then I find chords which I like, and one thing leads to another. I'm not afraid to do something quite simple. That's what I learned many years ago when I was playing keyboard sessions on pop tracks.

***Crossing the Bar* is based on a poem by Tennyson.** He uses the imagery of crossing from a harbour over a sandbar into the open sea to describe a very peaceful journey from life to death. It's really lovely and I just thought, 'How would you express that gentle rocking motion of a boat on the water?'

It was liberating to write music that wasn't dictated by something having to be a certain length or hit certain points. It was daunting at the same time, though, because the blank page can be terrifying. If somebody says to me 'write anything you like', that's awful. There are too many possibilities and too many choices.

I would love to write a musical. I am a bit of a musicals buff and I like the buzz of working in the theatre; there's a great energy to it. I am a million miles away from writing a musical, though, because I have no ideas and nobody has come to me and said, 'I want to write a musical with you.' But I'll just put it out there!

Studio Secrets



Quiet City: Alison Balsom's latest on Warner

We reveal who's recording what and where...

The ***Freiburg Baroque Orchestra*** has formed an exclusive partnership with Deutsche Grammophon and will release a series of recordings. First this year is one based on Mozart's visit in the late 1770s to the court of Elector Palatine in Mannheim. Works by him including Symphony in C major will be paired with those by composers he would have encountered on his visit.

DG's creative relationship with the ***Verbier Festival*** is being taken to another level with the launch of a new label. Verbier Festival Gold will release a new recording from its vast archive each month: the first release, out now, is Verdi's Requiem, featuring the festival orchestra and Coro Teatro Regio Torino, conducted by Gianandrea Noseda.

Alison Balsom is building on a 20-year creative partnership with Warner Classics (formerly EMI Classics) by signing a new five-album deal. The first release, *Quiet City*, sees the virtuoso trumpeter explore 20th-century American music with works by Miles Davis, Bernstein and Copland. It also features a new arrangement of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* for trumpet, piano and orchestra.

Decca Records recently signed the rising male soprano ***Samuel Mariño***. His debut recording has been in the can for a while and is scheduled for release on 27 May. *Sopranista* sees Mariño perform a variety of arias from 18th-century opera, including world premiere recordings of pieces by Cimarosa and Joseph Bologne, plus arias by Gluck and Mozart not previously recorded by a male soprano.

Berlin's ***Backlash Music***, a label which specialises in contemporary and improvisatory music, is getting UK distribution through Orchid. Forthcoming releases include drummer/composer Max Andrzejewski's *Mythos*, described as born out of a 'violent interaction with Wagner's infamous *Ring Cycle*'.

FELIX GRUNSCHLOß, KAUPO KIKKAS

The joy of the studio: 'you're given a chance to sculpt your performance'

REWIND

Great artists talk about their past recordings

This month: KONSTANTIN LIFSCHITZ *Pianist*

MY FINEST MOMENT
Beethoven *Complete Piano Sonatas*
Konstantin Lifschitz (piano)
Alpha Classics ALPHA 584 (2020)

Beethoven's Sonatas are like stepping stones for musicians, and the piano was one of the instruments Beethoven knew best. It's a medium through which, unlike any other, we can see his entire development and all those challenges are on the performer. I started to perform one sonata a year from school age; I wasn't rushing at all. Then when they said they wanted the cycle in 2017, I still had quite a few sonatas that I hadn't ever touched seriously. So it was a bit of pressure!

I played the cycle in Taipei, Taichung and Hong Kong, and there were things I wasn't particularly happy about, so when they said that they wanted to revisit the live recordings I was very sceptical. When they gave me the recording I tried not to be too critical. In fact, as many faults as those live performances had, I felt that if I were given enough patch sessions to repair some of the stuff, it wouldn't be impossible. I was given the chance, got the sponsorship and flew to Hong Kong two or three times after the cycle.

The recording is by no means my final statement on these works, so I'm hoping I will have chances to repeat the cycle; I did it last year in the Czech Republic and I think I was making some progress.

MY FONDEST MEMORY
Ravel *Daphnis et Chloé*
Konstantin Lifschitz (piano)
Orfeo C905162A (2017)

Studio recording is a totally different activity: you're given a chance to sculpt your performance and you're not bound

to the result of momentum and adrenalin. I did a recording of French and Russian music, inspired by the *Ballets Russes* and Serge Diaghilev in Paris, with music by Debussy, Ravel, Stravinsky and also a Russian, Boston-based composer called Jakov Jakoulov.

My own arrangement of music from Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé* involves playback/dubbing, and the feeling of playing this amazing, very rich and juicy score with yourself is a feeling I will never forget. I've played it in concerts, of course, and I always had to sacrifice precious details. But the studio enables you to do much more than what is possible in concert. The possibilities of modern recording are incredible.

Jakov Jakoulov composed a terrifying piece called *Carousel* and I remember very vividly working with him on the music. There are a few living composers whose music I have recorded, including Peter Seabourne in Britain. It's a huge advantage when you can work thoroughly and meticulously with a composer, detail by detail, note by note.

I'D LIKE ANOTHER GO AT...
JS Bach *The Well-Tempered Clavier, Books 1 & 2*
Konstantin Lifschitz (piano)
VAI DVDVAI4488 (2008)

I released a DVD of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* in a live performance from Miami. It was all done in a single day, and all played by heart. It was just a very long marathon, and it became an important interpretation of the work, but I am by no means satisfied with the

result. I do want to come back to a studio and really make it happen properly.

The industry is rapidly changing, though, so I don't know if it's feasible at all. Less and less people are buying CDs, especially here in Europe or in America. People download stuff and they don't care if the sound quality is good. It's such a belittling medium for a classical performance; you never get something really loud or really soft; there's no nuance. Actually, my favourite place to listen to a CD is in the car, but of course new cars don't have CD players! So I wonder what the point is of producing a CD anymore. Nevertheless I would like to make a new studio recording of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, whatever it costs; it would really be an important goal for me.

A place definitely inspires you, so the recording location is really very important. I personally prefer the studio here in Switzerland, but everybody has their preference. We will see.

Konstantin Lifschitz's recording of works by JS Bach and Peter Seabourne is released in May on Willowhayne

Buried Treasure

Pianist ***Alexander Ullman*** introduces us to a selection of his favourite recordings

The Young Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli – The Beginning of a Legend
Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli (piano)
Teldec 0630-13303-2

This is more about the interpretation than the music itself. It's quite a rare recording and I first listened to it when I was in my teens, when I was first discovering Michelangeli. It just seems so radically different to the rest of his output in that it's a lot more free and there's less of the neurotic perfectionism that one usually associates with his recordings. It's truly wonderful – in particular the Chopin Mazurkas.

Franck Prélude, Choral et Fugue
Blanche Selva (piano)
Malibran-Music CDRG 177

I'd never heard of Blanche Selva before listening to this album on Spotify, which has this radically beautiful interpretation of the Franck. It's one of the first recordings of the piece, done around the same time as Alfred Cortot's famous recording of it. She manages to capture the piece's inevitability without being too rigorous and strict in adherence to the architecture, and also she creates this beautiful French soundworld.

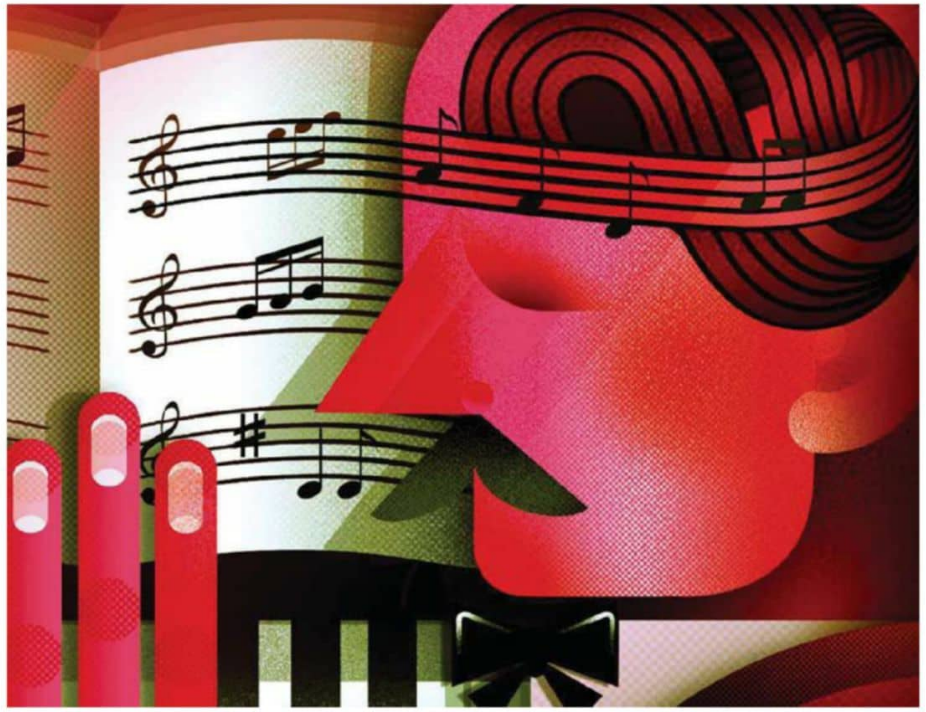
Gibbons Keyboard Works
Daniel-Ben Pienaar (piano)
Deux-Elles DXL1126

Gibbons wrote his music during a Golden Age for English culture. He was a contemporary of William Byrd, Shakespeare, Thomas Hobbes and Christopher Marlowe. It was for that reason that I got interested in it and I started playing around with a lot of his works. I think this music's unfairly neglected. Daniel's performance here is very inventive and there's a feeling of informed improvisation. It's also very rich, intricate and poetic writing.

Alexander Ullman's recording of Liszt Concertos is out on 24 June on Rubicon

THE LISTENING SERVICE

Memory games



Performing from memory hasn't always been required of our soloists – so why is it universally expected today? **Tom Service** makes the case for using the score

ILLUSTRATION: MARIA CORTE MAIDAGAN

Why do professional classical musicians do it? Why do they memorise entire pieces, from violin partitas to piano concertos, from sonatas to symphonies? All those thousands of notes, every single one of them going into the brains and bodies of soloists, singers, orchestral players and conductors, so that, at will, they can play any bar of a fugue by Bach or a concerto by Tchaikovsky, without hesitation, deviation or repetition.

One of the reasons is that we in the audience love the frisson that these feats of memory give us. Think of any concerto performance you might have seen: with no sheet music in front of the soloist, it's as if the music is emerging unmediated from their subconsciousness. The music is a spell that's enchanted in front of our eyes and ears; it no longer belongs to Beethoven or Rachmaninov – it's Anne-Sophie Mutter's, it's Martha Argerich's.

Yet this memory fetish wasn't always part of musical culture. It began in earnest with Franz Liszt, in his solo concerts in the early decades of the 19th century. Liszt's piano recitals were sensual rituals of super-virtuosity, in which his audiences were transfixed by his ability to produce whole repertoires of music on the spot.

The pianist Stephen Hough has written about this turn to memory, great for Liszt but anathema to others: 'Chopin would not have approved.' In fact, Chopin 'chastised a pupil once for playing a piece from memory, accusing him of arrogance'. And why? Because 'in the days when every pianist was also a composer, to play without a score would usually have meant that you were improvising. To play a Chopin ballade from memory might have seemed as if you were trying to pass off that masterpiece as your own.'

'To play without a score in Chopin's time would have meant you were improvising'

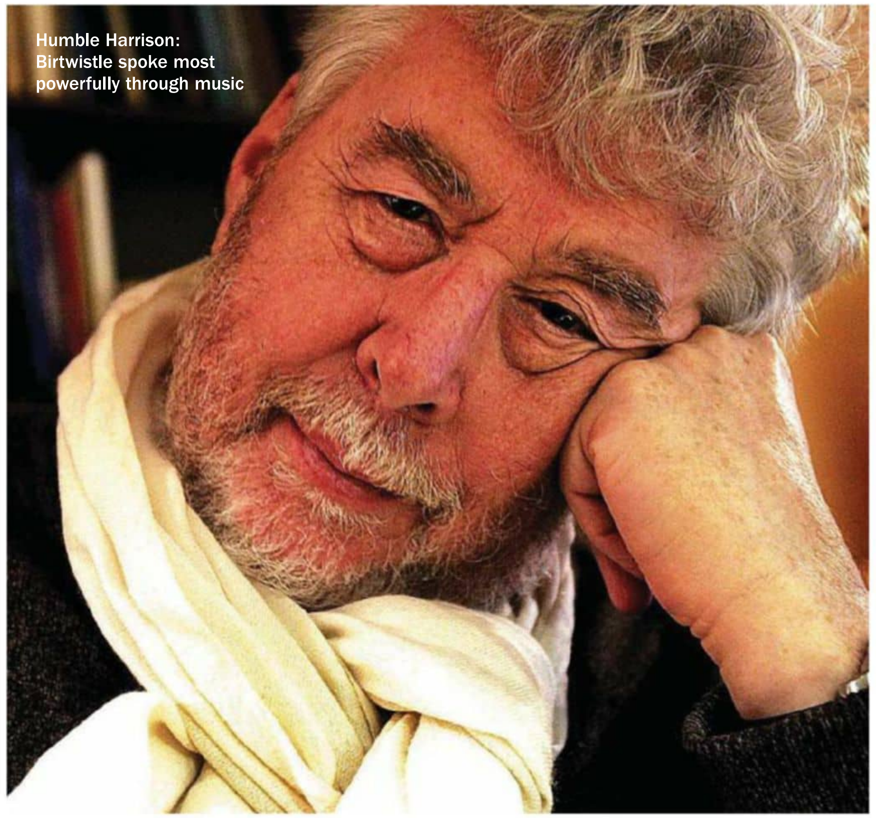
That's the hubris of playing from memory: pretending as a performer that you're making it up on the spur of the moment is an affront to the composers who toiled over their pieces.

And there's another problem with memory. The condition for a culture that demands that soloists learn their parts off by heart is that there must be a fixed historical repertoire written by other people for them to learn. And since the majority of them are now dead, there's no real danger of anyone mistaking the performer for the composer. Our insistence on memory comes at the cost of new pieces becoming part of the repertoire, composed so quickly there's no time to memorise them.

So next time you see a soloist playing with the sheet music, it's not that they haven't learnt the piece: they're restoring musical culture to a state of potential creation, not a mausoleum of memory in which every note is fixed in advance. While memory can be freeing for some musicians, we as an audience shouldn't demand it of all of performers. When memory becomes an ideology, we might be losing more than we're gaining.

BBC RADIO 3 90–93FM — Tom Service explores how music works in *The Listening Service* on Sundays at 5pm

FAREWELL TO…



Humble Harrison: Birtwistle spoke most powerfully through music

GETTY

Harrison Birtwistle

Born 1934 *Composer*

Often brash and uncompromising, Harrison Birtwistle's music could infuriate many – not least when his *Panic* for saxophone and orchestra caused uproar at the 1995 Last Night of the Proms – but also won him a wealth of admiring listeners, inspired countless performers and influenced other composers. Immaculately crafted, it also had its own distinctive – if admittedly hard-won – beauty.

Born in Accrington, Lancashire, Birtwistle took up the clarinet as a child and went on to play in the town's military band. It was the clarinet that won him a scholarship to the Royal Manchester College of Music where he rubbed shoulders with composers Alexander Goehr, Peter Maxwell Davies, Elgar Howarth and pianist John Ogdon and, with them, founded the New Music Manchester group. He wrote some of the most influential works of the late-20th and early-21st centuries, from vocal and chamber pieces such as *Songs by Myself* (1984) and *Orpheus Elegies* for oboe, harp and countertenor (2004) to large-scale orchestral works including *The Triumph of Time* (1972) and *Earth Dances* (1986) and operas ranging from 1967's *Punch and Judy* to 2008's *The Minotaur*, and won more British Composer Awards and Royal Philharmonic Society Awards than any other musician.

Rare talent: Radu Lupu had a mythic quality

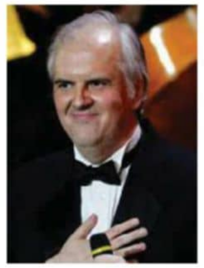
Ironically, given that he dutifully attended so many award ceremonies, such occasions did not seem a natural stamping ground for the quietly spoken, undemonstrative Birtwistle. And though he did give interviews, this was a composer whose most powerful utterances lay in his music itself. We will be paying tribute at greater length in a future issue.

Radu Lupu **Born 1945** *Pianist*

An audience with Radu Lupu was not easily forgotten. Rather more unbuttoned than your typical concert pianist, Lupu's somewhat ruffled demeanour belied the control and finesse of his music-making. It could almost be a religious experience to witness the Romanian-born virtuoso at the keyboard, as he seemingly channelled some higher power. The music of Mozart, Brahms, Schumann and Schubert occupied the majority of his focus during his long career.

He started young, giving a first recital at the age of 12 – he'd started learning piano at six in his hometown of Galati. Well into his teens he made his way to Moscow, where he studied thanks to a conservatory scholarship, and by his early twenties he had won a clutch of high-profile prizes – including the Leeds and Van Cliburn competitions. While he was never exactly forthcoming as a public figure, something which only added to his mystique as an artist, his music took him to stages the world over. His recorded legacy is certainly rich, but it was in concert where the real magic of this unique player was truly witnessed.

Nicholas Angelich **Born 1970** *Pianist*



Nineteenth-century German repertoire was also at the heart of Nicholas Angelich's music-making, though the US-born pianist had a sense of adventure and was just as comfortable championing new works. While undoubtedly virtuosic at the keyboard, he will be remembered for the expressiveness and sensitivity of his playing. Born in Cincinnati to musical parents – his father played violin in the city's Symphony Orchestra for decades – Angelich was taught by his mother from a young age and showcased his talent publically for the first time at the age of seven. Wanting the best for her son, she moved with him to Paris when he was just 13 so that he could study there. Though he would go on to perform in concert halls and at festivals on both sides of the Atlantic, both with orchestras and in chamber recitals, Europe would become his home, and it is there that Angelich did most of his work on stage and in the studio. In recent years, he took on the role of soloist-in-residence with Montreal's Metropolitan Orchestra.

Also remembered…

The Belgian **Philippe Boesmans** (*born 1936*) started his musical life as a pianist but – self taught – went on to become an acclaimed and prize-winning composer of opera, among other works.

Stewart Brown (*born 1952*) was the founder of Testament Records, and a passionate music lover and producer who brought historic recordings back to modern audiences in a number of acclaimed releases.

A miracle of sound: Jordi Savall and Le Concert des Nations

Music to my ears

What the classical world has been listening to this month

Raffaele Pe Countertenor

Couperin's *Leçons des Tenèbres*, sung by **Gérard Lesne**, was the first Baroque recording that I listened to when I was at school. At the time I was playing the organ and singing baritone in the choir in my home town and was very much into sacred music. It was love at first sight – both with Lesne's countertenor voice and with French Baroque music – and gave me the idea that this might be the artistic path that I'd take in life.

I love **Jordi Savall** and Le Concert des Nations' *L'Orchestre du Roi Soleil* disc of music by Lully. When I first heard this it was like a miracle of what could be done in terms of sound and expressive possibilities with historical instruments. There are other recordings of this music that are probably more accurate musicologically, but the imagination that Jordi shows here makes it, for me, one of the most meaningful Baroque discs of the last 30 years.

Kenneth Gilbert's disc of Rameau's works for harpsichord is an interesting recording for all musicians, including singers and even jazz players. Gilbert showed how to create something different out of a piece that everyone knows, and he did it not just with smart musicianship but with an intelligent and precise approach to keyboard technique. So on one side, there's the freedom of Savall, and on the other the geometry and organisation of Gilbert.

And also...

London's **National Portrait Gallery** is one of my favourite museums in Europe. I'm quite obsessed with people's faces – the way they look has a relevance to the way they do things. For me, walking around the gallery's rooms has also always been a way to feel closer to British culture. If I had to choose one favourite painting, it would be Thomas Barker's *The Secret of England's Greatness* depicting Queen Victoria giving a bible to an African.

Raffaele Pe performs the title role in Handel's Tamerlano at The Grange Festival, 10 June – 3 July

> READER CHOICE
>
> **Michael Baws**
> **Birmingham**
>
> **Charlotte Politi** fully deserves her place as a Rising Star in your May issue. In March, Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla was due to conduct the CBSO in Weinberg and Shostakovich in Birmingham, but she tested positive for Covid that morning. A few hours later, Politi stepped in. She dropped a Weinberg work and substituted a glowing performance of a scene from *Swan Lake* in a memorable statement of the quality of Tchaikovsky's orchestration and melody. Further, she totally understood the anxieties of the Shostakovich. I hope to see more of her.

> 'I'm very old school and love to zoom around in my sports car and put on a CD'

Anne Akiko Meyers Violinist

I've been obsessed with **Morten Lauridsen**'s music, especially his sacred choral music. I recently performed 'O magnum mysterium' with the LA Master Chorale, which was a tremendous experience for me. To hear a symphony of voices, as opposed to instruments, was so transcendent. Lauridsen has been such a big influence in my life, with his singing qualities and soulful, pure melodies, and his sound really resounds with other singers as well – everyone from Roberta Flack to Kathleen Battle.

I like to try and find things that really inspire me to feel happy. I love **Arturo Márquez**, so I've been playing a lot of his music. The 'Fandango' Violin Concerto is an extraordinary experience of dance rhythms and crazy Mexican folk themes. And that's really apparent in his *Danzón* No. 2, too. Whenever I play his music, it's tremendously inspiring; there's such spirituality and soulfulness.

I'm very old school and I still listen to CDs. I love to zoom around in my sports car and put in a CD. It's not just classical music, but also soul, blues and jazz. I'm blasting Frank Sinatra and Tony Bennett half the time, as well. I would love to go back in history and work with **Duke Ellington**; he wrote thousands and thousands of scores and his approach was so fresh and risk-taking.

And also...

My life thrives on non-musical things. Recently we were at the **Van Gogh** immersive exhibition in New York and I was staring at his *Starry Night*. Its story is so extraordinary; how he spent the last year of his short life in an insane asylum. He painted it in his room, and it comes completely from his imagination. To go to a museum is just so soul nourishing; it's great that we can finally go back and admire art.

Anne Akiko Meyers's album 'Shining Night' is out now on Avie

> READER CHOICE
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>
>
> **Adrian Lam**
> **London**
>
> I attended the Barbican concert on 8 April where conductor Sakari Oramo (above) and the BBC Symphony Orchestra gave a compelling account of **Langgaard**'s rarely heard First Symphony. Oramo wrote on his Facebook page that Langgaard's style is hyper-romantic, and hyper-romantic it is! The performance was intense, gripping, sometimes tumultuous but sometimes bittersweet. It was one of the most rewarding concerts I have attended recently, and I hope more people will get to listen to this piece! Would you consider including it on a future *BBC Music Magazine* cover CD?

Alex Heffes Composer

Like many people I have followed pianist **Benjamin Grosvenor**'s career for a long time. I've been listening to a lot of great pianists recently and his Liszt album on Decca is fantastic. The piece I particularly like is Liszt's Berceuse. Many pianists can play lots of notes very fast, and Grosvenor can certainly do that, but actually the Berceuse is very simple. For me, a pianist who can find the space in between the notes and make it come alive is something really great.

I've been listening again to a beautiful orchestral score that I used to love when I was much younger, which is **Elmer Bernstein**'s music for *The Age of Innocence*, a Martin Scorsese film. It's infused with Brahms and is very reminiscent of his Third Symphony – anyone who knows that piece will hear and feel this. It's not that Bernstein is cribbing from it, but it's a homage. It's so different to anything you hear on film now.

Husky tone: Joni Mitchell in 2000

One of my favourite records is **Joni Mitchell**'s orchestral version of *Both Sides Now*. What I've been doing recently, which has been quite fun, is going back to the original 1969 version she recorded on her album *Clouds* and comparing that to the version she did with full orchestra, with wonderful arrangements by Vince Mendoza, released around 2000. Her voice has dropped almost an octave-and-a-half since she first recorded it, and she has this incredible husky tone. It's such a powerful and magical piece of music.

And also...

I'm alone in the studio a lot as a composer and sometimes I need to take my mind off things. I've dipped back into the world of the **Rubik's Cube**. I'm pretty good at completing the cube quite fast, but now I'm trying to stretch myself. My family gave me a treat recently which is a Rubik's Cube without colours. It's all silver, except all the pieces are slightly different shapes. It's become a bit of an obsession and it really keeps my brain twisting.

Alex Heffes's solo piano album 'Sudden Light' is released on Silva Screen Records on 6 May 2022

Our Choices The *BBC Music Magazine* team's current favourites

Charlotte Smith *Editor*
Interviewing Patricia Kopatchinskaja about the folk-infused repertoire on her Chamber Award-winning album *Plaisirs Illuminés* this month put me in the mood for ***Bartók***. The composer's Viola Concerto is, of course, wonderful – but it's the Second Violin Concerto, with its heart-breaking *Andante tranquillo*, that stops me in my tracks every time. My favourite recording still has to be James Ehnes's rendition with the BBC Philharmonic conducted by Gianandrea Noseda – warm and human, yet somehow broken.

Jeremy Pound *Deputy editor*
Researching and writing a feature on ***Holst*** a couple of issues ago merely served to remind me of just how much of his music I've yet to get properly acquainted with. Doing so since has proved a real joy, thanks not least to discs such as Sir Andrew Davis and the BBC Philharmonic's 2018 recording of works including 'The Cotswolds' Symphony, *A Moorside Suite* and *Indra*. While none of these are likely to challenge the hegemony of *The Planets*, they are full of colour, charm and invention.

Michael Beek *Reviews editor*
I moved house recently and so had to box up my CD collection for a few weeks. Finally unpacking them was like rediscovering lost treasures – I know it's material, but some of them mean such a lot. I enjoyed dusting off the ***Hans Zimmer*** (right) titles, especially after his much-deserved Oscar for *Dune*. His 1994 score for *Beyond Rangoon* was first choice once the player was unpacked.

Alice Pearson *Cover CD editor*
A news feature about the desperate attempt by a Ukrainian museum to save priceless art treasures from the destruction of war reminded me of the composer ***George Butterworth***, who lost his life in the First World War – the promise of his early works suggests that he would have left many musical treasures had he lived longer. His *Two English Idylls* are beautifully crafted evocations, heard at their best on the archive recording of the LPO conducted by Sir Adrian Boult.

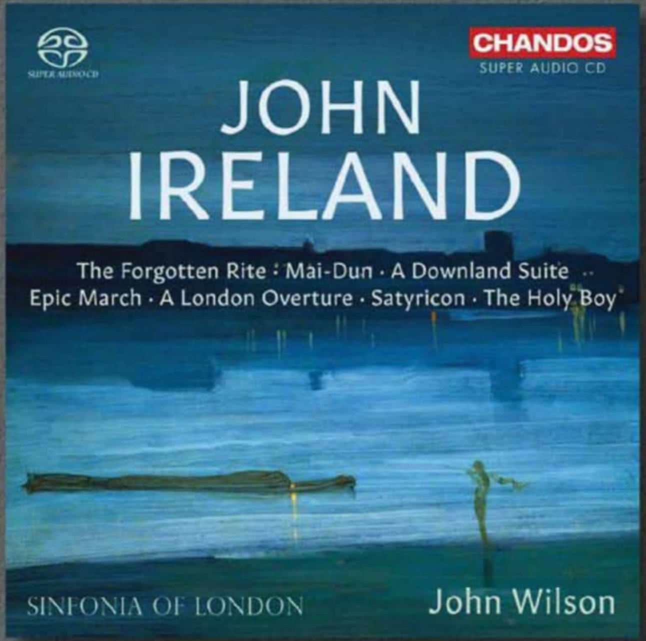
Rebecca Franks *Freelance contributor*
One piece of music I didn't know I needed in my life until recently was a contemporary classical reworking for voice and marimba of Abba's *Lay All Your Love on Me*. But composer-singer ***Caroline Shaw*** and Sō Percussion's take on the Swedish pop classic is an addictive listen that's gone straight on to my favourites' playlist. They strip the music right back and turn it into a radically intense modern-day chorale.

GETTY, BENJAMIN EALOVEGA, DAVID ZENTZ

CHANDOS
THE SOUND OF CLASSICAL

JUNE RELEASES

SURROUND-SOUND HYBRID SACD



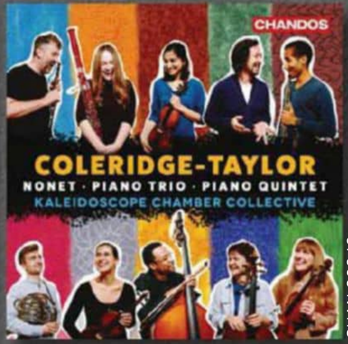
RECORDING OF THE MONTH

JOHN IRELAND
Orchestral Works

Sinfonia of London | John Wilson

John Wilson and Sinfonia of London turn to the music of John Ireland: the *overture Satyricon*, *A Downland Suite*, the symphonic rhapsody *Mai-Dun*, *The Forgotten Rite*, *A London Overture*, *The Holy Boy*, and *Epic March*.

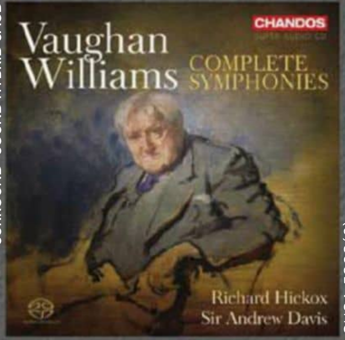
CHSA 5293



COLERIDGE-TAYLOR
NONET, PIANO QUINTET, AND PIANO TRIO
Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective
Britain's brightest chamber ensemble returns with a revelatory journey through early chamber works by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor.

GRIEG
LYRIC PIECES
Peter Donohoe
Peter Donohoe's innate musicality shines in this extensive programme of Lyric Pieces by Grieg, demonstrating the composer's unprecedented genius as a harmonically sophisticated miniaturist.

SURROUND-SOUND HYBRID SACD



VAUGHAN WILLIAMS
COMPLETE SYMPHONIES
London Symphony Orchestra
Richard Hickox; Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra
Sir Andrew Davis
Celebrate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Vaughan Williams with this reissue of the first complete recording of the symphonies in Surround Sound. The box set, at budget price, includes radio interviews with Ursula Vaughan Williams, Barbirolli, Boult, and the composer himself.

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SURROUND-SOUND HYBRID SACD

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Richard Morrison

British music has thrived under our Queen – but has she encouraged this?

With the Queen's Platinum Jubilee looming, let's talk about royalty and music. There's more to say than some might think. Some monarchs have had a massive effect on the music of their times. It's likely, for instance, that Wagner would never have written his greatest operas – or at least not on the grand scale that he did – without lavish patronage from the more-than-slightly-bonkers Ludwig II of Bavaria. Similarly, Louis XIV's ostentatious cultural requirements at Versailles boosted developments in music that were aped across Europe. The Prussian king Frederick the Great could talk serious counterpoint with Bach. And it's quite possible that, had Prince Albert not died at 42, his wide-ranging cultural links (particularly with Mendelssohn, to whom he and Victoria were devoted) would have made 19th-century Britain a powerhouse of the arts, as well as of commerce and industry.

On the whole, though, the British monarchy isn't renowned for its musical interests. George V's response when someone asked him why *La bohème* was his favourite opera – 'It's the shortest' – seems typical of a dynasty whose sense of duty compels its scions to sit through wodges of culture without necessarily showing much enthusiasm for it.

How, then, will our present monarch's 70 years on the throne be rated, musically? There's no doubt that the reign of Elizabeth II has coincided with a many-splendoured musical renaissance in Britain. From Britten to McCartney, from Janet Baker to Adele, from Jacqueline du Pré to Sheku Kanneh-Mason, from Bowie to Benedetti, the parade of top talent nurtured in these islands has surely been as impressive as anything Germany has produced in the same period. But the very word 'coincided' implies that the Queen herself has had little to do with it. Is that a fair judgement?

In my mind I've drawn up a balance-sheet, yet I still can't quite decide. On the minus side, she has rarely commissioned new music and employs few musicians except in her chapel choirs (and, indirectly, in the military bands that supply the oom-pahs at state parades). Though it's called the Royal Opera

> **The Queen isn't exactly an avid concertgoer. She was 68 before she attended her first Prom**

House, Covent Garden rarely gets a royal visit – or at least not since the death of Princess Margaret, something of a ballet groupie. And the Queen isn't exactly an avid concertgoer. She was 68 before she attended her first Prom, even though the world's greatest classical music festival is only a bugle-call from her back garden.

None of that suggests a galvanising impact on musical life. Yet in 2005 she established the Queen's Medal for Music, matching the Medal for Poetry that had been awarded annually since the 1930s (one wonders if there are any poets in Britain who haven't yet received it). The music medal has been deliberately awarded to musicians such as the choir trainer Simon Halsey and the Northumbrian pipes virtuoso Kathryn Tickell – heroes who have not necessarily been widely recognised for the great community work they do.

That made a difference. So did the ten years in which the Queen had the mischievously outspoken Peter Maxwell Davies as her Master of Music. He used the position (apparently with her tacit approval) to speak out on such issues as the dearth of music in schools.

If the words 'long live our noble Queen' in the National Anthem are sung with special fervour these days, though, it may be because many people think that the monarchy will go into a steep if not terminal decline after she has gone. The new King Charles III, or George VII as he may call himself (he thinks Charles is an 'unlucky' name for a king), will certainly have to grapple with some knotty family issues. But could he also become the most pro-active royal patron of music since Prince Albert? His tastes in music certainly don't differ greatly from Albert's. He doesn't just revere minor Victorian composers such as Hubert Parry; he even thinks such obscure 19th-century figures as Julius Benedict are pretty good too.

His personal tastes won't matter so much, though, if he really sets about championing all varieties of music and musicians while he is king. At present we live in an age when almost nobody at the forefront of the British establishment – either royal or political – seems the slightest bit interested in classical music. Leadership from the monarch may have only a symbolic value, but at least it would encourage musicians to believe they really matter to the people running the country. It's been a long while since that was the case.

Richard Morrison is chief music critic and a columnist of The Times

AWARDS 2022 WINNERS!

Scaling the heights

Igor Levit's *On DSCH* is an achievement of monumental proportions – an intellectual and physical marathon, as the Russian-German pianist reveals to Rebecca Franks

Recording of the Year and Instrumental Award

Igor Levit
On DSCH
Shostakovich: 24 Preludes and Fugues; R Stevenson: Passacaglia on DSCH
Igor Levit (piano)
Sony Classical 19439809212

BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE AWARDS2022
RECORDING OF THE YEAR

A journey with Shostakovich: Igor Levit describes the 24 Preludes and Fugues as 'a ritual of self-exploration and self-discovery'

FELIX BROEDE

Igor Levit is no stranger to the BBC Music Magazine Awards. In 2014, he was named Newcomer of the Year for his debut recording of Beethoven's late piano sonatas, which our critic described as 'perfection'. Several highly praised discs later, the Russian-German pianist has struck gold again, with an unmissable recording of Shostakovich and Ronald Stevenson titled *On DSCH*. Not only has it scooped Levit the Instrumental Award in the public vote, but the jury has also given him the top gong: Recording of the Year. It is 'a huge personal honour' to win, says Levit. 'Thank you so much.'

And it matters to Levit that the awards are for this album, as it features two composers close to his heart. The starting point is Shostakovich's 24 Preludes and Fugues, which the Soviet composer wrote in the early 1950s. Without doubt, this is Shostakovich's most important work for piano, says Levit, a kind of musical diary written in the grip of censorship. 'There is something unique about this combination of warmth and immediacy on the one side and pure loneliness on the other,' he reflects. 'For me, it is a ritual of self-exploration and self-discovery that deals with very intimate questions.

'A very special aspect is that you have the 23 highly individual preludes and fugues, almost like encountering 23 different human beings, each with their own unique story to tell,' continues Levit. 'Then at the very end, once you arrive at number 24, this is the piece that creates the idea of togetherness, of communion.' As a result, it has always made sense to Levit to play the cycle, all two-and-a-half hours of it, in its entirety.

If the stylistic language of the Preludes and Fugues is pure Shostakovich, its musical model dates from centuries earlier. In this work, the composer pays homage to Bach, offering a modern counterpoint to *The Well-Tempered Clavier*. And there are other connections between the two composers. Both wrote their own monograms into their music, spelling out BACH and DSCH in notes. Shostakovich's motif became the basis for the second work on Levit's album, Stevenson's *Passacaglia on DSCH* of 1962, often considered the longest single-movement piano piece in the repertoire. 'Sadly, I never met Stevenson, but I gather he was a larger-than-life figure, a very gentle person, highly educated, non-conformist and of course a Marxist,' says Levit. 'His *Passacaglia on DSCH* is dedicated to Shostakovich, who himself was a master of the Passacaglia form, so we come full circle.'

Levit has been playing the Scottish composer's *Passacaglia* in concert in recent years, including at London's Wigmore Hall, where his performances have been met with rave reviews. 'It is the most international piece I know,' says Levit, 'the musical embodiment of the idea that there is no such thing as a nation state. This piece therefore travels with you from one country to another and is pure internationalism. It's a most astonishing piece, second to none.'

It is also, by any standard, astonishingly difficult to master. 'It is brutally polyphonic with 25 things happening at the same time, yet you only have ten fingers,' he says. 'Yet none of that matters in the end, as the experience of playing or hearing it is all that matters. It is a compendium of life – music that tells us of our responsibility towards the world as a whole as referenced and heard in its diversity and inclusivity.'

That's very much in keeping with Levit's life and career to date. He is engaged with politics and the myriad issues facing society today, sharing his views everywhere from Twitter to mainstream TV in Germany. His artistry and activism are intertwined. When he embarks on a new musical project, he gives it his all. 'I am drawn to works that speak to my soul and in which the great questions of human existence may be found,' he says. 'Whether it be Ferruccio Busoni, Thelonious Monk, Frederic Rzewski or Bill Evans, once I feel a connection then I am fully engaged and

> 'I am drawn to works in which the great questions of human existence are found'

all I want to do is play.' He's also involved in every aspect of his albums, including the covers. *On DSCH* features vivid original artwork by Christoph Niemann, a German illustrator and author. 'His cover is colourful – kaleidoscopic even – playful, curious, light and sensual and I'm deeply grateful that he was able to be part of the project,' says Levit.

On DSCH was released in the second year of the pandemic, a time which saw Levit rise to the challenge posed by concert hall closures. During that first global wave of Covid, he streamed online more than 50 live daily performances from his home, including the Shostakovich and the Stevenson. Now, he's embracing the real world again. 'I am delighted to have just been appointed co-artistic director of the International Spring Festival in Heidelberg, which is wonderful,' he says. 'I'm learning new repertoire and I am very much enjoying being back on the road after all the months of lockdown and making exciting new plans for the future.'

Turn the page to discover the winners of all this year's BBC Music Magazine awards

A wolf at heart

Violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja has found her perfect pack in Camerata Bern on her album of folk-infused 20th- and 21st-century works, as she explains to Charlotte Smith

Concerto Award | Patricia Kopatchinskaja

Plaisirs illuminés

Francisco Coll: *Les plaisirs illuminés;* **Ginastera:** *Concerto for Strings;* **Veress:** *Musica concertante;* **plus works by Bartók, Kurtág and Ligeti**

Patricia Kopatchinskaja (violin), Sol Gabetta (cello); Camerata Bern/Francisco Coll

Alpha Classics ALPHA 580

'When you aim for perfection in your playing, there can be no spontaneity and no surprises. This is an incredible pity, because art is about invention. Of course, you must practise like a slave, but in the end, you should throw that baggage away, become a bird and fly over everything.'

Although Patricia Kopatchinskaja is speaking about recording her Concerto Award-winning album, *Plaisirs illuminés*, she might be describing her whole philosophy as a performer. Over the years, the idiosyncratic Moldovan-born violinist has developed a reputation for vivid and dynamic live interpretations – from practically dancing as she performs Ravel's *Tzigane* barefoot to donning brilliant white clown makeup to embody Schoenberg's Pierrot lunaire. And although the idea of capturing that sense of in-the-moment spontaneity on disc can sometimes seem a daunting prospect, there is no doubt that she has achieved her goal on this now award-winning album, recorded with the chamber orchestra Camerata Bern, for which Kopatchinskaja has served as artistic partner since 2018.

Included on the recording are works by Alberto Ginastera and Sándor Veress, the latter composed especially for the Swiss-based group in 1966; a new double concerto for violin and cello, the album's title work, by Spanish composer Francisco Coll; and several smaller works by Kurtág, Bartók and Ligeti. For Kopatchinskaja, there are two threads, or 'nerves' as she so colourfully puts it, that link the works: their basis in folk traditions and their incredible virtuosity – not just for the soloists, but for every member of the ensemble.

'I wanted to play something that would challenge everyone,' says Kopatchinskaja. 'I wanted to have fun, but also to travel together to the highest musical horizons. Approaching these works is like being a mountaineer and seeing in front of you the most beautiful peak. You are drawn to it, knowing that experiencing the sun and the air up there will change your soul.'

Listening to the album, it's clear that it features deeply complicated compositions, but what, specifically, was challenging for the players? By way of an answer, Kopatchinskaja recounts an anecdote about Veress. 'There's a funny story in which a member of an orchestra once dared to suggest in a letter that his work was too challenging,' she says. '"Maestro," he wrote, "we have practised the piece again and again with a metronome, but it is still very difficult" – to which Veress replied, "Well don't worry, I will bring two metronomes for you to use!"' Particularly in the Veress, individual musicians must play simultaneously in different metres and in order to keep this polyphony of time signatures in check, 'each player must be very clear about their own part and never lose concentration'. For the Ginastera, on the other hand, physical stamina is paramount. 'You need to be able to run a marathon to play this work,' says Kopatchinskaja. 'You need arms like Arnold Schwarzenegger. It's like playing ten weddings in one night.'

The main task for all works on the album, though, is to retain a sense of musicality despite the technical complexity, she stresses. It's for this reason that the ensemble welcomed composer Francisco Coll to conduct their performance of his double concerto *Les plaisirs illuminés*, despite being a normally conductorless ensemble. 'It's not about the difficulty of the work, but the spirit of the composer,' explains Kopatchinskaja. 'Francisco is a daring, intelligent, brilliant young man – a painter as well as a composer – and we wanted to have him onstage with us. His energy gave us another way of enjoying the music.'

Also welcomed to the project was Kopatchinskaja's frequent collaborator, the cellist Sol Gabetta – and it was for their individual temperaments and their mutual energy as a duo that Coll wrote his work. 'Francisco knows us both very well, so he was able to swallow our personalities and to produce something very personal,' says Kopatchinskaja. 'He is fascinated by Sol's generosity, by her sensuality of sound, and also by the way that she perfects her sound – she works in such a caring way on individual elements and small details. And in my playing he was looking to capture something wild and adventurous. He understood us entirely, creating a beautiful tapestry of friendship and of crazy journeys together.'

> 'Coll understood us entirely, creating a beautiful tapestry of friendship'

It's little wonder, then, that despite being recorded in a studio 'through cold, artificial wires' the album brims with dynamism and character. In part, the folk wellspring at the core of each work can claim responsibility – for music that might at first glance seem intimidatingly dense and dissonant has at its core 'an earthy humanity that vibrates and

Taking a fresh look: violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja relishes spontaneity

JULIA WESELY

Miniaturist masterpiece: *Les plaisirs illuminés*

Illuminated pleasures

Music imitates art in Coll's work

Composer Francisco Coll's double concerto *Les plaisirs illuminés* – 'illuminated pleasures' – is inspired by a work of the same name by Salvador Dalí (above). Produced in 1929 and currently housed in New York's Museum of Modern Art, the oil painting packs an incredible amount of detail into its modest 24 x 35cm frame, revealing that Dalí, the world's most famous surrealist painter, was also a talented miniaturist.

The work's title almost certainly refers to the shining imagery projected on or performed within the three theatre-like boxes that make up the main section of the composition – through these separate 'theatres' Dalí was able to play out a sense of disconnection between reality and illusion, and to showcase both personal and universal dreams and anxieties. His own disembodied head appears in the central box.

Coll is one in a long line of composers inspired by works of art, including Saint-Saëns, whose 1874 tone poem *Danse Macabre* is based on an ominous 15th-century painting by Giacomo Borlone; Musorgsky, whose *Pictures at an Exhibition* has its origins in the works of the Russian artist, architect and designer Viktor Hartmann; Respighi's *Botticelli Triptych*, inspired by three paintings by the great Renaissance Italian painter; and Stravinsky, whose libretto for his opera *The Rake's Progress* is connected to eight paintings and engravings by William Hogarth.

GETTY

A tremendous trio: composer Francisco Coll flanked by Kopatchinskaja and cellist Sol Gabetta

speaks directly to your animal,' says Kopatchinskaja. 'There is so much colour, so many ideas and such rhythmic richness.'

But it's the close and intense musical partnerships that make the album truly special. 'When I meet with Sol, everything becomes music,' she enthuses. 'It's like when you go to the market to buy the freshest vegetables of the season and they smell so fragrant. And then you cook together and enjoy the meal with your family. It feels like that when we rehearse; it's not like practising as you do at a conservatory, and even an incredibly complicated modern piece that might otherwise cause a pain in my stomach is transformed into something I can truly relish.'

Camerata Bern enjoys an equally strong connection with the violinist, and although they took a little while to refine their method of working together, Kopatchinskaja credits the Swiss ensemble as being fundamental to 'the best musical moments in my life'. Crucial to the success of their partnership is a sense of genuine collaboration. As an artistic partner, Kopatchinskaja does not impose her ideas in a dictatorial way, but instead is keen to encourage everyone to be open-minded. 'I bring my ideas to rehearsals, but I am prepared for these to change, as every member of the ensemble works with the score and is so knowledgeable about the work,' she explains. 'The musicians have become so strong – like wild animals – so their energy matches my own and

Teamwork: Coll helps 'PatKop' with her make-up

we channel this intention into every single note.'

An example of this can be seen in their articulation, Kopatchinskaja explains. Ask your average ensemble to play *piano* and they will play softer, though it might take ten minutes to achieve the required volume. But during a recent performance of Schubert's 'Death and the Maiden' it took 'one second and they were so soft that you could hear the air conditioning,' she marvels. 'Or when I make an *accelerando*, they come right with me. So, it's like working with the best team of knights I could imagine.'

It's the dichotomy between exacting precision and artistic passion that perhaps best sums up Kopatchinskaja as an artist. 'A wolf needed many generations to become a dog, but I think I'm still more a wolf,' she says. In Sol Gabetta and Camerata Bern, the violinist has found the perfect balance between wildness and discipline.

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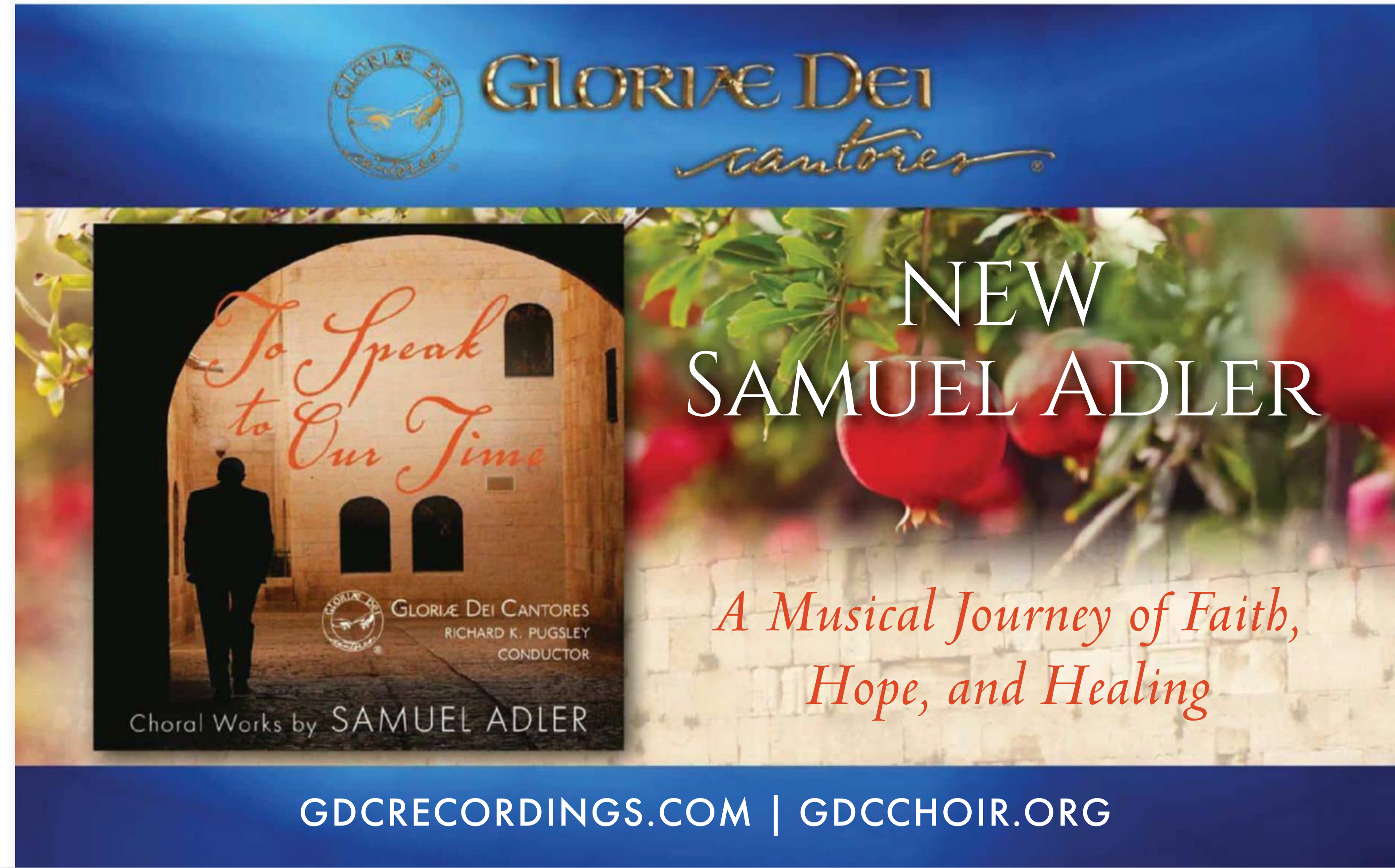


Newcomer Award
Freddie De Tommaso

Passione

Tenor arias by Buzzi-Peccia, Capua, Innocenzi, Puccini, Respighi, Tosti etc
Freddie De Tommaso (tenor); London Philharmonic Orchestra/Renato Balsadonna *Decca 485 1509*

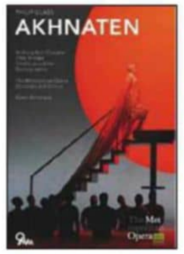
'Part of the idea was to bring a bit of Italian sunshine!' says Freddie De Tommaso (above). 'Many of these songs I discovered when I was changing from baritone to tenor, and was listening to tenors from the past – Caruso, then those around the 1970s such as Di Stefano, Corelli and Del Monaco, who all sang those songs. They then fell out of fashion, so I wanted to try to do my bit to bring them back.'

Passione mixes familiar names such as Puccini, Bellini and Respighi with lesser-knowns such as Tosti, Buzzi-Peccia and Cardillo, and there's a strong southern Italian accent. 'My father was from Puglia, so I'm a fairly fluent Italian speaker. However, quite a number of the tracks are in the Neapolitan dialect, so I had some special coaching to get those words exactly right.'

Recorded mid-pandemic in November 2020, *Passione* needed a venue large enough to hold a socially distanced orchestra – the Watford Colosseum – and for De Tommaso himself, his debut recording was something of a learning curve: 'It's so different from doing live performance. You have to learn quite quickly when to really give it the beans, and when to tone it down. But it was so exciting, and I'm happy it's been so well received.' *Jeremy Pound*

Top of the Glass: a scene from the winning production of *Akhnaten*; (below) conductor Karen Kamensek

Opera Award
Karen Kamensek



Philip Glass

Akhnaten (DVD)
Zachary James, Richard Bernstein, Aaron Blake, Will Liverman, Anthony Roth Costanzo, Dísella Lárusdóttir, J'Nai Bridges; Metropolitan Opera Chorus and Orchestra/ Karen Kamensek; dir. Phelim McDermott (NYC, 2019)
Orange Mountain Music OMM5011

'It's a huge honour,' says Karen Kamensek of her win in this year's Opera category. 'It took me a while to even comprehend that we were nominated! If this award reflects the love of the public, then that's a job well done.' The American conductor is at the helm of this unforgettable production of Philip Glass's *Akhnaten*, his 1983 opera on the life of the ancient Egyptian pharaoh. The DVD, released by Orange Mountain Music, captures a live performance by The Metropolitan Opera in New York in November 2019. 'With something big like this, you don't think about the fact that they're recording it live,' says Kamensek, 'but this production is a well-oiled machine with very trusted and worthy colleagues. We all supported each other – and didn't sleep for three days afterwards!'

The opera is classic Glass. It's the final instalment in his trilogy exploring historical figures and uses his trademark minimalist style to create music of hypnotic beauty. Texts in their original Egyptian, Hebrew and Akkadian add atmosphere and authenticity. The orchestral score pulses with repetitions, while the singers' parts demand pure intonation and fierce concentration. 'Everyone wants to sing it as purely and perfectly as possible, and after a while, the bar is raised so high that it becomes like an ultra-sport,' says Kamensek, laughing. 'I remain very calm and try to take the pressure off the musicians. I'm very alert when conducting it, yet even though *Akhnaten* is quite long I'm actually energised at the end.'

And this production features a cast that's hard to beat, including J'Nai Bridges, Dísella Lárusdóttir, Zachary James and countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo in the title role. 'It is tailor-made for him and his strengths,' says Kamensek. Costanzo first sang the role at English National Opera in 2016, where director Phelim McDermott created this perceptive production. Notably, it features jugglers, an idea based on hieroglyphics of the first juggling being done in Egypt. 'There's a sort of collective heartbeat that happens because of the slow motion of the juggling,' explains Kamensek. 'The imagery is so important. When I watched this DVD, I noticed all sorts of detail I didn't have time to see when I'm conducting. I was really happy to see it.' *Rebecca Franks*

CRAIG GIBSON, KAREN ALMOND, DENISE BIFFAR

A recipe for success: the Sitkovetsky Trio record Ravel and Saint-Saëns at St George's Bristol

Chamber Award
Sitkovetsky Trio

Ravel • Saint-Saëns

Ravel: Piano Trio;
Saint-Saëns: Piano Trio No. 2
Sitkovetsky Trio *BIS BIS-2219*

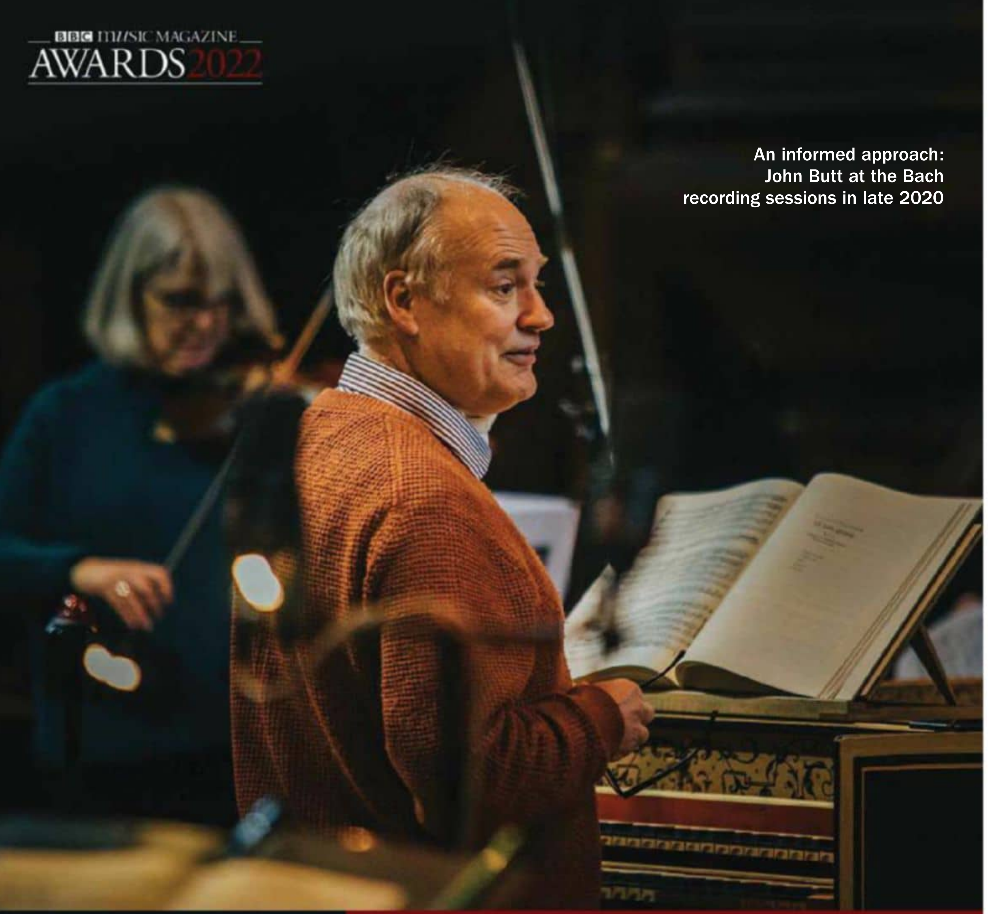
'As we began working on this recording, we realised there were important connections between the works,' says violinist Alexander Sitkovetsky. 'Ravel wasn't quite sure how to put together a trio, so he looked to the piano trios of Saint-Saëns, whom he greatly admired, as an example for how this should be done.' That the Sitkovetsky Trio had already decided to record an album featuring piano trios of the two composers was therefore fortuitous.

Both works had for some time formed part of the group's concert repertoire – a crucial ingredient for the album's success, all three members agree – but putting together their dream interpretation in the studio remained a challenge. 'For me, finding the right colours in any impressionistic music is very complicated,' says cellist Isang Enders. 'Ravel's music, in particular, has such variety of imagination in the sound – so we had to find a way to encapsulate his orchestral sensibility in just three instruments.' Pianist Wu Qian agrees: 'I don't have the biggest hands, so I had to work out how to play the notes and to use the pedal to create this huge orchestral texture.'

Enders found the recording process a thoroughly useful exercise for the Ravel. 'The recording studio can be like a laboratory,' he says. 'There in "Frankenstein's studio" you can experiment with different balances – even between single notes – and indulge in a level of detail that would never be possible in a live concert.'

Saint-Saëns, a more 'conservative' composer in Sitkovetsky's words, and 'nostalgic' according to Enders, required a more traditional approach. 'We felt that longer takes worked far better for the Saint-Saëns because of the music's sweeping nature,' says Sitkovetsky. 'The first and last movements, especially, are huge in scale – you can tell he was an organist! So we wanted to capture that sense of grandeur.'

That the recording took place in St George's Bristol was certainly helpful. 'The hall has a wonderful acoustic,' says Sitkovetsky. 'But, of course, when making a recording you're not playing for someone at the back of the room – instead you're taking the hall's acoustic and directing it into a microphone right in front of you. So, it's a case of adjusting your sound and technique for that situation.' *Charlotte Smith*



An informed approach: John Butt at the Bach recording sessions in late 2020

Choral Award John Butt

JS Bach

Cantatas BWV 32 'Liebster Jesu', 82 'Ich habe genug', & 106 'Actus tragicus'

Joanne Lunn (soprano), Matthew Brook (bass) et al; Dunedin Consort/John Butt

Linn Records CKD672

This glorious recording of three Bach cantatas may have won the Choral Award but, explains John Butt, music director of the Dunedin Consort, it was two individual voices that initially inspired its creation. 'We wanted to profile the two main soloists, Joanne Lunn and Matthew Brook, in repertoire that we'd tried out with them before,' he says. 'These seemed the ideal cantatas to do that and, in BWV 32, to bring them together too.'

The three cantatas share a theme of the acceptance of death – though, as Butt points out, 'It's actually quite difficult to avoid that subject in Bach's cantatas' – and, with their comparatively small number of performers, were also an ideal match for the timing of the recording itself. 'It wasn't as if we had some sort of overweening ambition to do some sort of "deathly essay" during the pandemic!' he says. 'It was more that the limitations and possibilities pushed us in that direction. Because it happened just before the lockdown at the end of 2020 took place, everything was quite limited in terms of travel, spacing and so on.'

Butt and the Dunedin Consort's recordings have regularly earned praise for their immaculate scholarship but, he insists, this doesn't just mean poring with a pencil over facsimiles of original manuscripts for days on end. 'While part of the scholarship does involve studying the original performing parts and scholarly editions, and considering the options, there's also critically informed scholarship which is all about looking at how atmosphere is created, how consciousness is manipulated during the course of a performance and how the average listener might respond to the way the music works. That all counts as part of my research.' *Jeremy Pound*

Discovering a heroine: soprano Kateřina Kněžíková fell in love with Duparc's songs

DAVID LEE, PETR WEIGL

Vocal Award

Kateřina Kněžíková

Phidylé

Songs by Duparc, Martinů, Ravel and Szymanowski

Kateřina Kněžíková (soprano); Janáček Philharmonic Ostrava/Robert Jindra

Supraphon SU 42962

This enchanting recording marked the solo debut on Supraphon for Czech soprano Kateřina Kněžíková, and it was a project that started just before the pandemic and blossomed as a result, as she explains. 'We were so lucky because we had the opportunity to play half of the album programme for the public. But the other half was just instinctive – I couldn't sit around and do nothing; I don't like doing nothing. So I just grabbed the opportunity to do something and recorded the CD. It made me very happy!'

> 'Phidylé was a peaceful, strong and determined woman'

Her starting point was Martinů's *Three songs on Chinese texts*, the recording of which would fulfil a long-held ambition. 'It had never been recored by a Czech soprano before. There's just one recording with a Slovak soprano and Jiří Bělohlávek conducting, so many years ago I had the idea that if I found the opportunity to record it, I would. It's great music; I love Martinů.'

Kněžíková turned to conductor Robert Jindra, an old friend, to help bring her album project to fruition. 'I've known Robert for so long, I think maybe 20 years. He was my teacher when I was studying at the Prague Conservatory, and he has developed into one of the greatest conductors. And because he was studying singing as well, he is very empathetic with singers.'

Including the title work, *Phidylé*, was Jindra's suggestion. 'He had the wonderful idea to combine the Duparc songs, which I didn't know. I just knew the name of the composer but not the work. It was like love at first sight; time stopped and I felt transported to another world. Then I discovered that Phidylé was an actual person! An amazing, hard-working, peaceful, strong and determined woman. She was the perfect name for the album.' *Michael Beek*

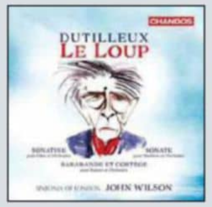
Orchestral Award John Wilson

Dutilleux

Le Loup; Oboe Sonata*; Flute Sonatine*; Sarabande et Cortège** (orch. Hesketh)

Soloists; Sinfonia of London/John Wilson

Chandos CHSA 5263



It was an old friend who first recommended Dutilleux to conductor John Wilson (above): 'I remember Richard Rodney Bennett telling me he was the greatest (then) living composer and urged me to listen to him; that's what got me started.'

Dutilleux's rarely recorded 1953 ballet score *Le Loup* is at the heart of this award-winning disc. Indeed, this album is actually the work's first recording by a non-French ensemble – a tantalising opportunity for the conductor. 'I'd heard an old, slightly abridged recording of it, and I just thought, "Why has nobody done this?" I just felt I had to do it.'

Wilson turned to Kenneth Hesketh, an old college friend, to help flesh out the album, as he recalls. 'Ken studied with Dutilleux in Paris, and four or five years ago he orchestrated some piano music of his for a concert. I wondered if he'd fancy turning his hand to the three wind pieces. They always seemed absolutely ideal for orchestral treatment.'

After previous success with Korngold and Respighi, this is the third year in a row that Wilson and the Sinfonia of London have won the Orchestral Award. So what's it like to be back again? 'I'm sort of surprised, but we've built up quite a hard-core following: I get a lot of people messaging me and emailing. Ultimately, the composer and the audience are the two most important things, aren't they?' *Michael Beek*

Lockdown playtime: Elena Urioste and Tom Poster bring cheer during the pandemic

Premiere Award | Elena Urioste and Tom Poster

The Jukebox Album
Works by Clarice Assad, Lili Boulanger, Gabriel Fauré, Cheryl Frances-Hoad, Donald Grant, Jessie Montgomery, Cole Porter, Mark Simpson, Huw Watkins et al
Elena Urioste (violin), Tom Poster (piano)
Orchid Classics ORC100173

Faced with an empty diary during the first lockdown, married musical duo Tom Poster and Elena Urioste found a creative way not only to fill their time and entertain people all over the world, but also to give composers some much needed work. Their #UriPosteJukeBox project saw the commissioning of six works for piano and violin, which received their premieres online. Those works are at the heart of *The Jukebox Album*, a recording which gave the pair the chance to do justice to the music written for them, as Urioste explains: 'We wanted to immortalise, with beautiful sound quality and on a gorgeous in-tune piano, the six compositions that had been penned for us. That whole element was so unexpected, and it wound up being one of the most meaningful parts of the whole *Jukebox* project.'

'We didn't want the album to just recreate the online project'

They surrounded the new works with a selection of pieces made popular during their online concerts, though a few just wouldn't work, as Poster shares: 'There were certain things that, without the visual element, would have worked less well and been deeply strange.' 'There were some things that simply require a Corgi onesie!', explains Urioste.

'There were also one or two things we did specially for the album, because we didn't just want it to be a recreation of the online project,' continues Poster. 'In fact, there was one arrangement I made the night before the recording sessions.'

Such creativity was typical of their approach to the *Jukebox* project, which earned them an RPS Award in 2021. And with this latest award, are they surprised that it continues to inspire people? 'We're still amazed that something that was so accidental, so low budget and so modest in its beginnings sort of became a thing,' says Poster. 'It's very, very meaningful and very touching,' adds Urioste. *Michael Beek*

A broad outlook: 'The job is more interesting when you combine it with a bit of life,' says Nicky Spence; (below) in ENO's *The Valkyrie*, 2021

BBC Music Magazine Personality of the Year

Nicky Spence

KI PRICE, GETTY

When one has had such a spectacularly successful year as Nicky Spence did in 2021, how exactly does one follow it? His answer was to begin 2022 by getting married… and then break both legs in a fall. 'I fell down some steps on the way to singing Janáček's *The Makropulos Case* in Berlin,' the Scottish tenor explains. 'I'd learnt all this bloody hard music just before getting married, and then didn't get to sing it. I guess all these years of people telling me to "break a leg" has come true!'

While rehab gets underway and Spence is forced to take things at a slightly slower pace, now is perhaps a good time to look back and pinpoint what, for him, were the highlights of a busy, busy 2021. 'It's been an embarrassment of riches – I've been so lucky. The premiere of the new production of Janáček's *Jenůfa* at the Royal Opera House was fantastic, and making my way into Wagner's *Ring* cycle at English National Opera was great too. It was also really lovely to be able to join Julius Drake for the recording of Vaughan Williams's *On Wenlock Edge*, as was giving recitals with my husband, Dylan Perez.'

Spence was not the only one getting pleasure out of those Janáček and Wagner performances, as the public and press were equally enthusiastic – 'Nicky Spence's tenor gleams thrillingly and sexily,' wrote *The Guardian* about the former, while *The Telegraph* praised his 'powerfully direct and naïve Siegmund' in the latter.

But just as appreciated in 2021 were his activities off stage, not least devoting spare time to administering Covid vaccinations near his south London home. 'The vaccinating stuff was just me doing my bit for all those who needed help,' he says self-deprecatingly. 'I think we all feel that we can just be defined by what we do for our day jobs, but it's

even more interesting when you combine that with a bit of life. I've really enjoyed encouraging younger tenors to go out, get drunk, smoke and enjoy life, as they'll feel so much more refreshed when they come back to work. It's so important to have that other side of the coin.' *Jeremy Pound*

‘That’s the beauty of quartets: there’s unity yet everyone has their own identity’

THE BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE INTERVIEW

Pavel Haas Quartet

As they celebrate their 20th anniversary, the Czech quartet speak to **Rebecca Franks** about their beginnings, welcoming new players into the group and their new Brahms recording

PHOTOGRAPHY: BORIS GILTBURG

On a Sunday morning in Prague, four musicians are crammed onto a sofa, jostling for position in front of a laptop screen. The sound isn’t working properly – there’s a lot of laughter and some accidental close-up views of the apartment floor before the glitch is fixed. And there are other distractions. First violinist Veronika Jarůšková jokes that the whole way through our interview she can hear the washing machine in the background. Meanwhile, second violinist Marek Zwiebel hopes that they won’t have to rehearse too long later, so that he can get to his son’s birthday party. This is the unfiltered version of life with the Pavel Haas Quartet, in which music, family and friendship are inseparable.

It’s 20 years since the ensemble was founded. Now one of the world’s leading string quartets, renowned for their impassioned, emotional and intelligent performances, awards and accolades have streamed in – at the BBC Music Magazine Awards alone, they have won best Newcomer (in 2007, for a recording of Janáček and Haas) and the Chamber category (in 2016, for Smetana). Jarůšková, the group’s original co-founder, still leads the quartet, but in 2016 her other co-founder, viola player Pavel Nikl, left for family reasons. Now, after a long search, viola player Luosha Fang is their newest member. And to cap things off, the Pavel Haas has a new recording out – of Brahms – on their beloved Supraphon label.

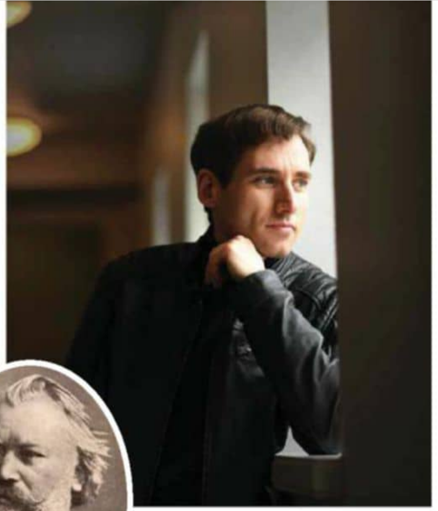
‘I can’t believe how time has flown,’ says Jarůšková. ‘Twenty years, what can I say?’ Cellist Peter Jarůšek chips in – I get used to the conversation dancing around like music with these four: ‘We didn’t plan a career. We didn’t have any strategy. We just really loved chamber music and wanted to play as well as possible, for our audience and our ears.’ Perhaps they didn’t plan such milestones as the wins at the Prague Spring Festival Competition and Premio Paolo Borciani in Italy, or the stint as BBC

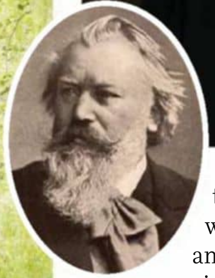
Pavel Haas (1899-1944)

Janáček's ill-fated star pupil

Born in Brno of Moravian-Jewish heritage, Pavel Haas, from whom the Quartet takes its name, studied at the Music School of the Beseda Philharmonic Society. In 1919, he enrolled at the Brno Conservatory, where eventually, in 1921, he joined Janáček's composition class. Janáček's teaching and music proved the most crucial formative influence on Haas's own music. He went on to compose several film scores and a good deal of incidental music for the Provincial Theatre in Brno, where his tragi-comic opera *The Charlatan* had a successful performance in April 1938.

In December 1941, Haas was arrested by the Nazis for his Jewish heritage and transported to Terezín (Theresienstadt), where he was held for three years. A good deal of music written by Haas and his colleagues while in Terezín was subsequently destroyed, so it is uncertain how much he composed in those years, though he certainly wrote three string quartets, an unfinished symphony, *Four Songs on Chinese Poetry* for baritone and piano, a work for male chorus titled *Al s'fod* (apparently his first and only work to set a Hebrew text) and a *Study for String Orchestra* which was premiered in Terezín under the Czech conductor Karel Ančerl. A performance of the latter work was filmed by the Nazis for propaganda purposes during an inspection by the International Red Cross. Haas was finally sent to Auschwitz, where he was gassed on 17 October 1944.





A marriage of minds: (clockwise) the Pavel Haas Quartet are a close, collaborative team; pianist Boris Giltburg is part of their extended family; Brahms, the subject of their latest recording

BORIS GILTBURG, SASHA GUSOV, GETTY, ALAMY

New Generation Artists, but their total commitment was intentional. 'I remember that I was doing masterclasses with Pavel Nikl, and we made this kind of statement,' says Jarůšková. 'We made a fire in the garden, and we said, okay, let's do this quartet properly with the two of our hearts and let's see what happens.'

'It was an adventure,' says Jarůšek, who joined the quartet soon after it was founded (he and Jarůšková being already married – they now have a daughter). Early on, they were coached by the legendary Czech viola player Milan Škampa. 'He was our mentor, even our guru,' says Jarůšková. 'He gave us hours and hours of his experience, not only of musical but also quartet life.'

Being part of a quartet, it is often said, is like being in a marriage with four people. 'It's a lot like a relationship,' reflects Fang. 'Or four painters painting one picture. That's the beauty of quartets: there's unity yet everyone has their own individual identity.' Jarůšek agrees. 'I only remember the good things, but it's not easy to work or live with four people. We are complicated as humans, and to be honest, we have egos, cellphones...'

Inviting someone new into the fold is a delicate business. When the Pavel Haas put out word that they were seeking a new permanent member, viola player Nobuko Imai recommended Fang 'as a fascinating personality,' explains Jarůšková, 'which is true!' Fang already had an impressive international career in her own right, as both a violinist and a viola player – and at first it seemed as if her diary was simply too busy. Yet Jarůšková persevered, because 'Fang was amazing, and it felt like our dream'. Despite the added challenges of Covid and visas (Fang lives in New York), she eventually joined the group in April 2021. 'Our first experience together on stage was in front of a camera in a virtual concert, rather than an audience,' remembers Jarůšek.

Marek Zwiebel is celebrating his own tenth anniversary with the Pavel Haas this year, and remembers his first concert well. 'It's another crazy story,' says Jarůšek, jumping in to explain. 'It was in 2012 and honestly there wasn't a good atmosphere in the quartet. After one particular concert, I had a call from the fiancé of our second violin, and he announced that she wouldn't be at the next one.' This clearly posed a problem – not least that the Pavel Haas were due to play Smetana's String Quartet No. 1, Beethoven's String Quartet No. 13, Op. 130 and the *Grosse Fuge* at one of their favourite venues, the Palau de la Música in Barcelona, the following week. 'We saw a video of Marek playing a Vivaldi concerto, but we'd never met him before,' explains Jarůšek, 'but we thought great player, good hair.' The whole group laughs again. 'The hair was a bonus.' Zwiebel spent the week learning the music. 'And that was my audition,' he explains. 'The jury was an audience of 2,000 people.'

The chemistry was right, and the rest is history. When the Pavel Haas Quartet do something, they do it wholeheartedly. Take their repertoire. There's a strong Czech thread – Janáček, Dvořák, Smetana and their namesake Haas – but they've also explored Beethoven, Shostakovich and Schubert. 'The composer's score is always first,' says Jarůšek. 'For example, for a long time I loved Bartók's quartets to listen to, but I wasn't sure I fully understood the music. So, for many years we were just waiting to play it. We can all play the notes, basically, but that is not the point of making music.' Being able to say something meaningful with their art is one of the Pavel Haas Quartet's guiding principles. Even when it meant turning down their Edinburgh Festival debut. 'We were asked to play a Szymanowski quartet around 2008, but we listened to it and we didn't understand how to play it, so we said, sorry, we can't,' explains Jarůšek. 'We took a risk that they would never ask us again – but they did.' The risk paid off, and the Pavel Haas Quartet have since become firm favourites with UK audiences, whether in Edinburgh or at London's Wigmore Hall.

Now they are immersed in a composer about whom they have plenty to say – Brahms. For this 20th-anniversary recording, the Pavel Haas have gathered their extended musical family. Nikl returns for String Quintet No. 2, a generous and expansive piece written in 1890 near the end of Brahms's life. And pianist Boris Giltburg joins for the turbulent Piano

> **'Brahms has to sound very natural to the listener – but that's not easy to achieve'**

Quintet, composed nearly three decades before. 'We had performed these pieces several times already, so recording was a smooth process,' says Fang. 'The String Quintet is always challenging because each voice is equally beautiful and you have to make space for everything.' Jarůšková agrees. 'If you have five peacocks just showing their beauty, it's too much of a beautiful thing.'

'Brahms has to sound very natural to the listener,' says Jarůšek. 'But that's not easy to achieve. And with the piano, the challenge is to be not too loud. Boris is exceptional in how he can bring colours from the piano and make it sing.' The Israeli pianist is, as Zwiebel puts it, 'the fifth member of the quartet' and often plays with the ensemble. 'We had an intense rehearsal in a short period for the Piano Quintet, and we covered a lot,' reflects Fang. 'The piece is almost philosophical in a way. And it's from a different period for Brahms. You can really hear how a composer and human being evolved over a lifetime.'

The Pavel Haas Quartet's appetite to explore remains undimmed. 'Part of the adventure and journey is to discover new music. We are finding what an amazing, talented guy Korngold is, for example,' says Zwiebel. His Quartet No. 3 is now in their repertoire, while Martinů is in their sights. 'The quartets are fascinating – even more difficult than Brahms,' says Jarůšek. 'Yes,' agrees Jarůšková. 'The music is great. Yet Martinů's brain was three times faster than most people's – everything is so fast. I'm always joking that if he had slower tempos he could write twice as many quartets. Then the slow movements are so beautiful, offering a kind of heavenly calm.'

So what have been the highlights of the past 20 years? For Zwiebel, 'every concert'. For Jarůšek, 'our daughter'. Jarůšková, unsurprisingly, concurs with her husband, adding: 'It's also the people – the promoters, our record label, our agent. It's amazing to see their faces and love of the music.' Fang has only been with them for a year, but her answer seems to speak for the group. 'We're in a beautiful bubble of music,' she says, 'but most important is how we can transfer this message of beauty to humanity and to people who need it even more than us. Especially during a time when art is considered a luxury. What is important is how can we continue that mission for the next generation.' With a goal like this, long may the Pavel Haas Quartet continue!

The Pavel Haas Quartet's new Brahms recording is out on Supraphon this May

National treasure

As Elizabeth II celebrates her Platinum Jubilee this month, Andrew Green investigates the elusive origin and irresistible rise of Britain's national anthem

'You know exactly what it is as soon as you hear the opening drum-roll,' says Major Stewart Halliday, director of music, Coldstream Guards. 'It captures the imagination right from the start.' And the melody that follows has been capturing imaginations for well over 250 years. Yet still, after all this time since its first recorded performance in 1745, evidence for the origins of *God Save the Queen/King* remains scant.

When that performance was given at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane on 28 September, London was in a state of panic. George II's Protestant reign seemed under mortal threat from the Stuart pretender Bonnie Prince Charlie – a Catholic – and his Jacobite forces. 'Jacobite rebellion was just under way in Scotland,' says historian Paul Monod of Middlebury College in Vermont. 'London was especially fearful of a supporting invasion by the French, landing in southern England. By December 1745 people were rushing to get their money out of banks... and stocks tumbled.'

Cometh the hour, cometh the song for a historic moment, arranged by prominent composer Thomas Arne for singing by three soloists following that evening's play at Drury Lane. The second line – 'God save great George our King' – perhaps affirmed George's occupancy of the British throne in the face of the Jacobite competition. The basic melody closely resembled what we know today, but we must imagine an ornate performance graced with embellishment and improvisation according to the practice of the day. The *Daily Advertiser* newspaper said the audience 'were agreeably surpriz'd by the Gentlemen belonging to that House performing the Anthem of God save our noble King. The universal Applause it met with, being encored with repeated Huzzas, sufficiently denoted in how just an Abhorrence they hold the arbitrary Schemes of our invidious Enemies, and detest the despotick Attempts of Papal Power.'

Further regular performances were given both at Drury Lane and also Covent Garden to equal acclaim. In no time, words and music were available via such publications as *The Gentleman's Magazine* and *The London Magazine*. The

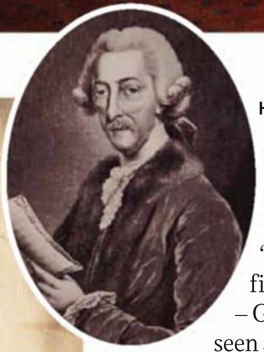
> With the final defeat of Bonnie Prince Charlie, the song of defiance became a song of victory

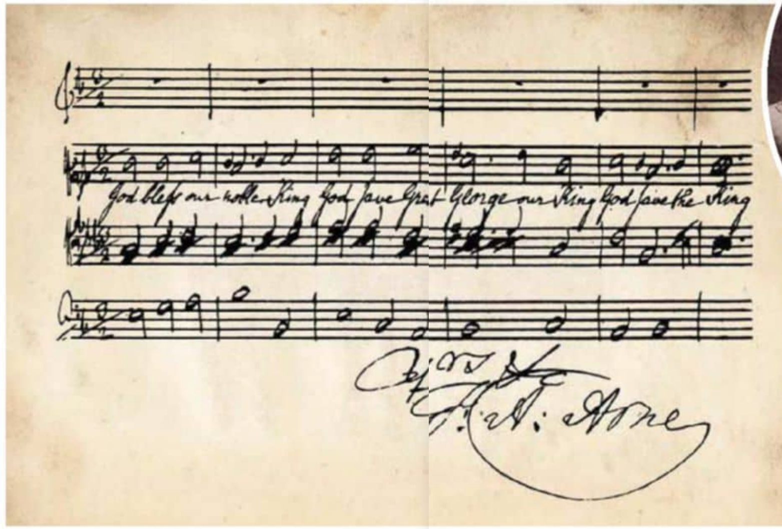
first, second ('O Lord our God arise') and fifth ('Thy choicest gifts in store') of the five stanzas recognised today were in place practically from the start. Once in print, the song made its way around the country, the impact doubtless enhanced by the final defeat of Bonnie Prince Charlie at the Battle of Culloden in April 1746 – song of defiance transmuting into song of victory.

In due process of time, without royal decree or Act of Parliament, *God Save The King* acquired the status of a 'national anthem'. Exactly when such a bold title would have been attached is – like so much else in this story – unclear. For decades it was simply one more popular song with patriotic overtones to place alongside Arne's *Rule Britannia* and Handel's 'Hallelujah Chorus'. 'Maybe its first appearance at a Coronation – George IV's in 1821 – should be seen as a milestone,' is Monod's guess. 'More likely, though, it was a process of slow evolution which continued through the 19th century... a development from the anthem being a celebration of the ruling monarch to a celebration of the nation.'

So what in musical terms gave these mere 41 notes such an infectious appeal? Well, ask a composer used to gauging broad-based taste. John Rutter says the anthem follows a time-honoured formula. 'Varied repetitions of the same melodic and rhythmic pattern always help lodge a piece in the brain,' he explains. 'The words fit the music perfectly, with no strange emphases. And, of course, the anthem obeys the golden rule that the climax, with a ringing top note, should be saved for very near the end. You're left feeling satisfied that the anthem has always known where it's going.'

In referring to that 1745 Drury Lane performance, the theatre's treasurer Benjamin Victor described the melody as 'an old anthem tune'. The first evidence of the words and music being printed – with no composer named – comes in the 1744 part-song collection, *Harmonia Anglicana*. But what was the 'old anthem tune' which apparently formed the musical basis for the song? Ultimately, it's shrouded in





Happy and glorious: (above) George IV's coronation in 1821, the first in which the anthem was used; (left) composer Thomas Arne and his handwritten score

GETTY

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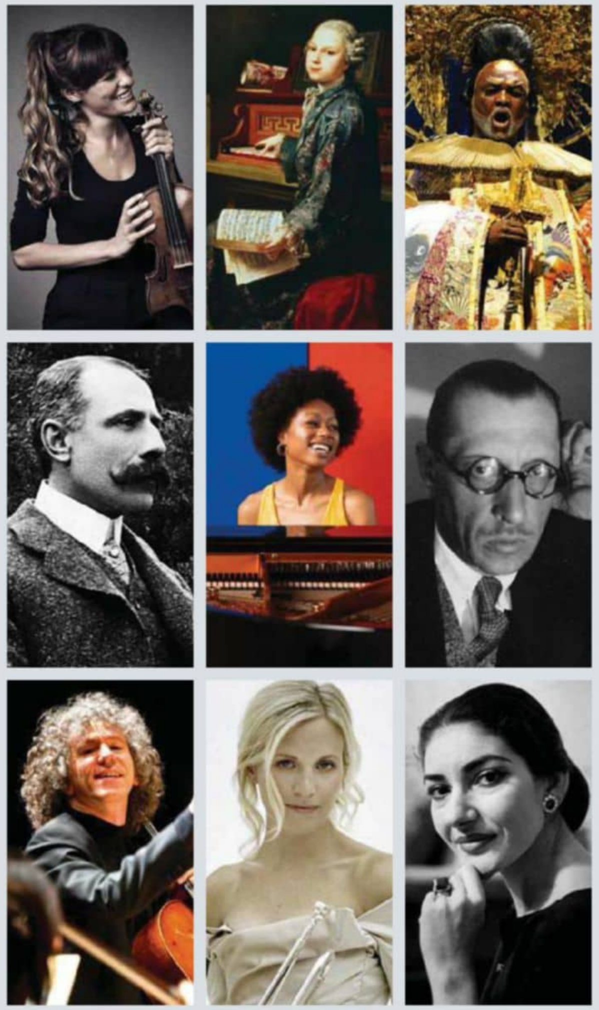

GETTY, ROBIN CLEWLEY, MAT HENNEK, ANDY GOTTS, SATOSHI AOYAGI

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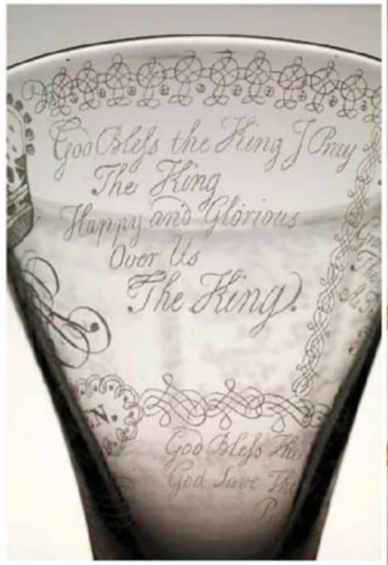

Long to reign over us: (clockwise, from right) Henry Purcell perhaps used the melody for James II's coronation; a patriotic postcard from World War I; sheet music of 'America', 1892; a Jacobite Amen glass with words from the anthem

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mystery. 'We shouldn't be surprised at this,' says Monod. 'It's extremely common for the origins of such music to be obscure, partly on account of the role often played by purely oral transmission. It was hardly unusual for public music to undergo transformation over time.'

No one delved into the possible origins of the anthem more assiduously than the indefatigable writer on music for the masses, Percy Scholes (1877-1958). His weighty *God Save The King!: Its History and Romance* appeared first in 1942. Scholes considered a host of derivations for the anthem, referencing scraps of melody from here and there. Does the tune have an origin in folk song, he pondered...or a carol...a Genevan patriotic song...a keyboard piece by the aptly named composer John Bull? Most intriguingly, he offered the possibility that the melody had been heard in a Jacobite anthem (what irony!) sung at James II's Catholic chapel in the 1680s, although it has been suggested elsewhere that it was heard even earlier, at the court of Charles II. The scholar Matthias Range suggested the tune may have been heard at James II's Coronation in 1685, featured in Henry Purcell's music for the acclamatory 'Vivats'. Did the composer Maurice Greene, court composer to George II, then fully 'rescue' the tune for the Protestant cause in the 1730s?

As for the origin of the words? Scholes's extensive research included considering 18th-century 'Jacobite glasses' (for drinking the health of the Stuarts) which bear a version of a few of the words for *God Save the King*. Did all the burrowing get Scholes any closer to the truth in all this? He simply said he 'dare not pronounce'.

Let's instead return to the ever-developing vogue for *God Save the King* after its 1745 outings. Newspaper advertisements for public entertainments demonstrate that a performance of the anthem was considered a draw in itself. When George III was making his way to Weymouth at the time of one of his famous bouts of illness, inhabitants of Lyndhurst spontaneously burst out with *God Save The King* as he passed through. In her famous diary, Fanny Burney noted that 'These good villagers continued singing this loyal song during [the King's] whole walk, except to shout "huzza" at the end of every stanza.'

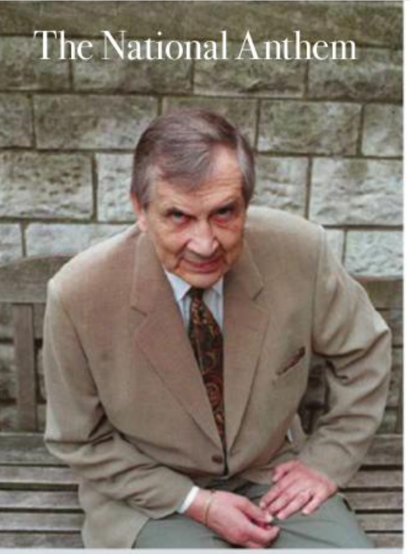
Britain's fight against Napoleon inevitably enhanced the popularity of the anthem, all the more so given the desire to drown out those of Republican persuasion in Britain. When George III survived an assassination attempt in 1800 – in the rebuilt Drury Lane Theatre – '*God save the King* was called for, and received with shouts of applause, waving of hats, etc,' reported one witness.

> Most people in the States will recognise the tune, but not necessarily as the British National Anthem

As the British Empire inexorably spread its reach through Victoria's reign, so too did *God Save the Queen*. By 1918 a competition was being launched to find words for an extra, Empire-tinged verse to celebrate all those 'pink bits' on the map. An officer serving in France – Capt. Walter Inge – triumphed with lines that concluded with the now distinctly non-PC...

Brothers of each domain,
Bound but by Freedom's chain,
Shout, as your Sires, again –
'God save the King!'

However, almost from the start the famous melody had become equally the property



The anthem overseas
Five non-British variants

Beethoven ***7 Variations on 'God Save the King'***
As the Napoleonic Wars started, Beethoven wished 'to show the English what a blessing they have in God Save the King'.

Paganini ***Variations on 'God Save the King'*, Op. 9**
The legendary violinist-composer wrote this showcase of dazzling virtuosity two years before he wowed British audiences for the first time.

Debussy ***Hommage à S. Pickwick Esq. P.P.M.P.C.* from *Préludes*, Book II**
The Anglophile Debussy references the anthem at the start of this deft portrait of one of Charles Dickens's best-loved characters.

Ives ***Variations on 'America'***
The teenage Charles Ives wrote this high-spirited organ work in the 1890s, giving its premiere himself at a New York Methodist church to celebrate Independence Day.

Rautavaara ***'Queen Victoria'* from *True and False Unicorn***
In his 'tapestry for voices', Rautavaara (above) includes this movement in which the national anthem melody features in an attempt by Victoria to lure the Unicorn – symbolic of the creative artist – into the bosom of British society.

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Substitutes and variants: England cricketers walk out to *Jerusalem*, 2015; (left) the Finnish composer Rautavaara

of the wider world of music. Way more than a hundred composers, from JC Bach (in 1768) to Finnish composer Einojuhani Rautavaara (in the 1970s) have incorporated the tune into their compositions in some way, for whatever reason (see 'The anthem overseas', left). The list contains individuals as legendary as Haydn, Beethoven, Brahms, Paganini, Liszt and Debussy. By far the greater number of names are nonetheless unfamiliar to us today – the likes of James Calkin and Jane Savage, Charles Chaulion and Norman Coke-Jephcott, Eugene Thayer and Samuel de Lange.

> The melody has been used as a national anthem in Sweden, Germany and Russia

More surprising is the number of countries where the melody, with different words, has been used as a ceremonial song or even a national anthem – in Sweden, Germany and Russia, for example. To this day, the tiny country of Liechtenstein uses the tune for its national anthem, or *Volkshymne*. The best-known example of a 'borrowing' of the tune is the US's 'alternative anthem', *America* or *My country, 'tis of thee*. 'When I was a keyboard student it was one of the standard pieces on which you were expected to exercise your skills in harmony,' recalls Allan Atlas, professor emeritus at the City University of New York. 'Most people in the States will recognise the tune immediately, but not that many at all will recognise it as the British National Anthem. People have an affection for the melody of *My country 'tis of thee*, but it perhaps lacks the drama of *The Star-Spangled Banner*... whose tune also comes from Britain!'

Republicanism in the UK has a long history, its roots going back to Cromwell's Commonwealth. Yet today, there's no real sign of it gaining traction despite the rocky times the monarchy has been through in recent decades. If the tide did finally turn against it, how would we The People go about selecting/commissioning a new anthem? Or would we settle for new words to the 'old anthem tune'? As it is, how long will it be before the Welsh and Scottish parliaments succeed in 'disestablishing' *God Save The Queen*, so that this is no longer the United Kingdom national anthem?

The sporting field has long been a testing-ground for alternative anthems, with teams from the UK's constituent countries making their own choices – *Flower of Scotland* for Scotland's rugby players, for example. England's cricketers waver between *God Save the Queen* and *Jerusalem*. '*Jerusalem* for me,' says BBC Test Match Special commentator Daniel Norcross. 'It's a cracking tune that matches the passion you hear in so many other national anthems.'

Major Halliday of the Coldstream Guards isn't so sure, given memories of his musicians playing the anthem at major rugby and football events. 'Imagine an evening game under lights, the opening drum-roll sounds, thousands of smartphone flashes go off for that photo of the scene everyone wants... and then that wall of sound as *God Save the Queen* roars out. Nothing like it.'

Work in progress

Unfinished scores left by the great composers often represent the height of their creative development; so, asks David Threasher, is there any point to the thankless task of trying to complete such works?

Unfinished works have long fascinated music lovers. After all, a composer surprised by death will often have been contemplating his or her most advanced work, delving further than before into the depths of his or her genius. Musicians tend not to play incomplete scores, so an intermediary is needed to assess the fragment and bring it to fruition as sensitively and as closely as possible to what can be discerned of the composer's style and intentions. Whether it be reconstructing a motet from a missing part-book – fairly common practice among the early music fraternity – or projecting large-scale orchestral or choral works, often from the scantest sketches, the completion of unfinished works has become something of a thriving cottage industry over the past half-a-century or more.

Ever since the revelation that Mozart hadn't fully completed his Requiem – sparking a bitter and protracted war of words in the 19th-century German music press – the final incomplete utterances of a range of composers, or even the abandoned ideas from earlier in their careers, have excited all manner of curiosity and comment. Mozart's Requiem and the C minor Mass from a decade earlier, Bruckner's Ninth, Mahler's Tenth and Elgar's Third symphonies, Puccini's *Turandot*, Berg's *Lulu* and Bartók's Viola Concerto are all major repertoire works that often now appear under two names separated by a rubric such as 'compl', 'reconstr' or 'elab'.

In fact it was Mozart's Requiem that kick-started the current trend for the interventionist completion of fragmentary works. The eventual publication – as late as 1965 – of all the manuscript material connected with the work caused musicians and musicologists to reappraise Mozart's intentions and to make often vituperative critiques of his amanuensis Süssmayr's shortcomings as orchestrator and surrogate composer. This resulted, during the 1970s, in a handful of 'cleaned up' versions of Süssmayr's supposedly faulty work and then, around the time of the 1991 bicentenary of the composer's death, a flurry of radical reinterpretations, stripping away anything considered to fall short of Mozart's genius and embarking again upon new completions from first principles.

> Mozart's Requiem kick-started the current trend for interventionist completion of works

The Requiem was long out of copyright (if it was ever in it), so there was nothing to stop a whole range of enthusiasts performing sometimes quite drastic surgery upon this much-loved piece of music. Other works took a rather more fraught and circuitous route to the forms in which we now know them. Elgar, for example, expressed a dying wish that 'nobody should "tinker" with the sketches' for the Third Symphony, the BBC commission upon which he was working during his final illness. Despite performances of the nearly complete sections of Mahler's Tenth Symphony, the first reconstruction by Deryck Cooke was initially 'banned', as he reported, 'by Mrs Mahler, whose decision must command the utmost respect'. And Sibelius's supposed burning of substantial material connected with the Eighth Symphony might be taken to indicate that he wished it to be concealed from the public.

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Imagining Mozart: William James Grant's 1854 depiction of the composer writing the Requiem on his deathbed

In all three cases, it was the family and descendants of each composer that resisted the involvement of others in ultimately bringing these final works before a hungry audience. It was only the belated realisation by the Sir Edward Elgar Will Trust, for example, that the copyright in his sketches had little time left to run that prompted them to appoint Anthony Payne to create a performing 'elaboration' of the Third Symphony. The Trust could thus control the performance and publication of the work, establishing a 'standard' version – which duly entered the concert and recorded repertoire – before their control over such matters expired. A similar situation applied to Sibelius's Eighth, with his executors latterly permitting the preparation of a little over three minutes' worth of music from the remaining sketches. These were recorded first by John Storgårds with the BBC Philharmonic (Chandos), and have recently appeared on Klaus Mäkelä's set of the symphonies (Decca), so it appears that they are gradually establishing themselves as an essential adjunct to the accepted symphony cycle.

What, though, do we learn from works such as these, ultimately left unfulfilled, interrupted by their creators' death, indisposition or, in the case of Sibelius, creative deadlock? It's fair to assume that a composer's final work will also be among his most advanced, his most ambitious in terms of technique, if not necessarily in terms of scale. Sibelius's fragments are more dissonant than might be expected, just as the harmonic language of Mahler's Tenth reaches beyond the innovations of the Ninth to dance on the brink of atonality. Mozart's Requiem, like the late works of Purcell and Handel, exploits a startlingly pared-down vocabulary, a heady distillation of Baroque-inspired counterpoint and operatic melody marking the dawning, perhaps, of a new compositional style that had been hinted at earlier the same year in *La clemenza di Tito*, *The Magic Flute* and the tiny motet *Ave verum corpus*. Many of these works represent their composers' most radical and progressive creations, so

Mozart plus: Beethoven's funeral

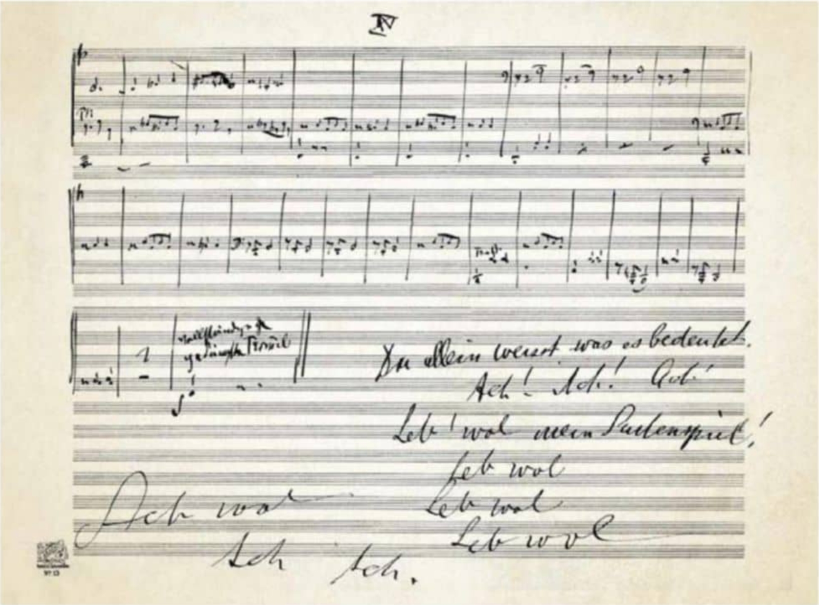
Mozart's Requiem

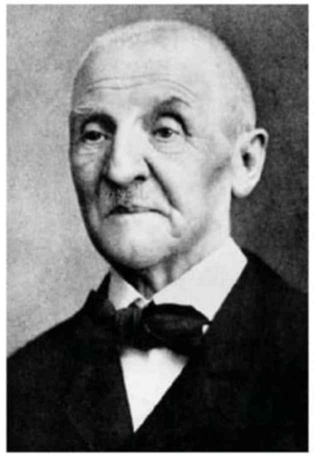
Completing a masterpiece

Franz Xaver Süssmayr is credited with the completion of Mozart's Requiem published in 1800. Today, there are recordings of at least 14 new versions by composers (Britten, Finnissy), keyboard-directors (Diego Fasolis, Arthur Schoonderwoerd), musicologists (Franz Beyer, Duncan Druce) and mathematicians (Richard Maunder). In the 19th century it was the Requiem of choice for the funerals of personalities ranging from composers (Haydn, Beethoven, Schubert, Weber, Chopin, Rossini) and cultural figures (Schiller, Goethe) to politicians (Napoleon).

For Beethoven's exequies, even the completed version was considered insufficient and a 'Libera me' by Ignaz von Seyfried was added, performed unaccompanied on 29 March 1827 at the Church of the Holy Trinity. Five days later it was performed, accompanied by orchestra, in its rightful place as a pendant to Mozart's Requiem at one of the Viennese memorial services for Beethoven. Seyfried's chant-like music is interrupted by instantly recognisable quotes from earlier in the Requiem at the words 'Dies illa, dies irae' and 'Et lux perpetua'.

Fragmentary evidence: (clockwise from right) John Storgårds with the BBC Philharmonic, who recorded sketches of Sibelius's Eighth Symphony; Mahler's handwritten score for his Tenth Symphony; Bruckner, who failed to complete his Ninth Symphony; a recording of Mozart's Requiem, as completed by Pierre-Henri Dutron





GETTY, ALAMY

it's hardly to be wondered that they tantalise and fascinate.

But whereas anyone can read an unfinished novel or appreciate an unfinished painting, music remains lifeless on the page until it is performed – and, of course, a score needs to be complete before it's picked up and given life by its performers. Constanze Mozart knew this when she commissioned the Requiem's completion, and it is the desire – the need – to hear the final thoughts of Mahler, Elgar et al that has driven the likes of Cooke and Payne to become their posthumous collaborators and carry these late pieces over the finishing line. In many cases the task is primarily one of orchestration: works such as Mahler's and Schubert's Tenth symphonies exist in continuous scores carrying the primary line of the argument and lack only the contrapuntal elaboration of that line and its distribution among the orchestra. Conversely, a work such as Elgar's Third Symphony or the finale of Bruckner's Ninth Symphony requires the gathering and ordering of disparate sketches before they can be deciphered and augmented.

Then there is the case of Mozart's Requiem, which – from the point of view of today's musicologists – is unfinished along three axes. First, there are the movements of the Sequence and Offertory that are complete in terms of their vocal and bass lines and require only sympathetic and stylistic orchestration. (Listen to one of the recordings that presents only the notes Mozart himself wrote, and you can hear how 'complete' the draft score is in musical terms, even without orchestration.) Then there is the Lacrimosa, which exists only as far as bar 8, and thus requires a sensitive continuation. The discovery in 1962 of a sketched 'Amen' indicates that Mozart envisaged a grand fugal peroration to the Sequence, and thus it is necessary for a completer to reconsider the trajectory and design of the heart of the work.

Finally, there are the Sanctus, Benedictus and Agnus Dei, movements for which no material in Mozart's hand exists. Some commentators have deemed these movements, as completed by Süssmayr, beyond the pale, the sole concoction of the hapless apprentice, unworthy to be placed alongside Mozart's genius. Others point out the felicity of aspects of their craftsmanship and the weight of tradition that requires their inclusion. Yet others divine snippets of genuine Mozartian material within them and create entirely new compositions out of it – a sort of 'fantasia on themes from Mozart' approach. Examples include the Sanctus recast in the minor in the recent completion by Michael Ostrzyga (Coviello) and personal responses to the Benedictus: extended and redesigned from its opening thematic material by Duncan Druce (EMI/Warner) but totally recomposed by Pierre-Henri Dutron (Harmonia Mundi), resulting in a startling new creation, audibly cut from Mozart's cloth but amplified and developed in a wholly original way.

Others don't even feel constrained by the expectation to operate within the stylistic parameters of the composer whose fragments they take on. Michael Finnissy is one composer who approaches Mozart's manuscript from the viewpoint of his own aesthetic, the Requiem's 18th-century sound world dissolving into Finnissy's 21st-century compositional voice as the manuscript comes to its premature conclusion (an excerpt recorded by King's College, Cambridge, gives a flavour of this). Berio is another who took this tack in a series of rapprochements with earlier music; his *Rendering*, for example, builds upon the sketched outlines of Schubert's Symphony No. 10 in D major.

But generally, those who undertake to complete fragmentary works will claim to honour the spirit of the original composer and his or her intentions. Most will have the humility to accept that their efforts are no more than a stop-gap; that for all their musicological acumen or compositional nous, they will never come close to equalling the imaginative potential of a genius at the height of his or her powers. Some will attain the enviable honour of having their work enter the repertoire: Payne's Elgar Third, for example, is unlikely to be challenged, let alone equalled, while Cooke's Mahler Tenth is generally accepted now as canonical, for all that other versions have appeared alongside it – and, indeed, some conductors still refuse to perform any more than the complete opening *Adagio*.

Then there are those attempts to round out a symphonic structure that will never fully satisfy. Schubert's 'Unfinished' Symphony, in the standard two-movement form we all know, is wholly able to stand as a remarkable work of art in its own right. Attempts to present the work in a projected four-movement form by orchestrating the curtailed Scherzo and to co-opt music from *Rosamunde* as a finale never feel any more than provisional: it is as if even Schubert himself was unable at that time to create any more music that reaches the unparalleled heights of inspiration exemplified by the extant *Allegro* and *Andante*.

> The desire to hear the final thoughts of Mahler and Elgar has driven Cooke and Payne to become their posthumous collaborators

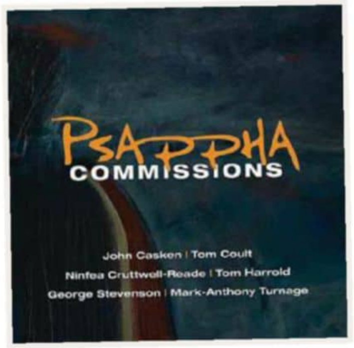
Bruckner's Ninth, too, has proved entirely sufficient in its three-movement form, that great *Adagio* seeming to say all that can possibly be said. The performing version of the finale that has gained most traction in recent years is by a panel of four musicologists, who have continued to revise it over the past three decades. It's undeniable that there is much high-quality material in the sketches and the opportunity to hear them is a valuable one. But can it ever be said that a realisation of these sketches ostensibly by a committee is the ideal way to experience the overwhelming force that this music can exert in its finest performances? The Ninth is likely to remain best known in its 'traditional' three-movement version, for all that it closes in the wrong key, its loose ends remaining untied.

All the same, the work undertaken by musicological seekers after truth is invaluable in illuminating the corners of composers' legacies that would otherwise remain shrouded in darkness. From the hapless Süssmayr up to the composers and scholars of today, the phenomenon of elaboration and posthumous collaboration is one that can only serve to enhance our understanding and enjoyment of the greatest of great music.

Psappha and precedents: the group with conductor Jamie Phillips; (right) Peter Maxwell Davies conducts the Pierrot Players in 1968

The shock of the new

Psappha, the Manchester-based contemporary music group, is now 30 years old and has brought 500 works into existence. Its outgoing artistic director Tim Williams shares the highlights with Tom Stewart



Manchester, 1991. The sun was rising on a decade-long night out that featured the likes of the Happy Mondays, the Stone Roses and the Haçienda nightclub. A short walk away at the city's Free Trade Hall, Kent Nagano would soon become principal conductor of the Hallé Orchestra – its new home at the Bridgewater Hall didn't open until 1996 – while Peter Maxwell Davies was named the associate composer/conductor of a different Manchester group, the BBC Philharmonic. That year also gave us Mariah Carey's *Emotions*, Michael Tippett's final string quartet and, thanks to enterprising Royal Northern College of Music percussion graduate Tim Williams, an ensemble called Psappha. After three decades as its artistic director, Williams steps down this year, leaving an imaginative legacy of learning and creativity for audiences, composers and performers alike.

Today, Manchester is a great place to be a composer. There's no shortage of groups, professional or otherwise, performance spaces and contemporary music festivals – but, as Williams recalls, things looked different back in the early '90s. 'After I left college, I realised there was no real outlet in the north of England for contemporary chamber music. Composers would study in Manchester but then head to London, where there were groups who could play their music.' That said, it's worth remembering that even the London Sinfonietta, that great doyen of British new music groups, was then only just over two decades old. The Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, an offshoot of the well-established City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, gave its first performance in 1987 (with a young Simon Rattle as its patron), while Liverpool's Ensemble 10/10 didn't appear for another ten years. 'There was a group of like-minded players in the northwest who wanted to be challenged musically and technically, so we got together and

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Patron and founder: Maxwell Davies lends Tim Williams some advice

> 'People have told me that the name is ridiculous, that no one can spell it and no one knows what it means. But I like it'

Psappha gave its first concert in September 1991,' says Williams. The group takes its name from a solo percussion piece by Iannis Xenakis, while its 1991 debut included a performance of Harrison Birtwistle's *Cantata*, a setting of poems by Sappho. 'For years people have told me that the name is ridiculous, that no one can spell it and no one knows what it means. But I like it.'

Psappha's artistic advisor in its early years was clarinettist Alan Hacker, who in the late 1950s founded a new music ensemble, the Pierrot Players, with Birtwistle and the close involvement of Maxwell Davies. Historically, Manchester's reputation as a crucible of outlandish compositional talent has rested to some extent with the time these two local lads spent at the Northern School of Music (which became RNCM in 1973) in the 1950s. The instrumentation and theatricality of Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire*, an early icon of modernist chamber music, was the model for both the Pierrot Players – renamed Fires of London in 1970 – and its younger Mancunian cousin. That grouping of flute, clarinet, violin, cello and piano, plus percussion, has proved to be an enduring combination, attracting countless composers across a broad range of styles. 'The Fires of London wound up a few years before we started but left behind such a strong body of work they'd commissioned,' Williams says. 'We've revisited it often over the years and particularly enjoyed doing Max's music theatre works,' he adds, referring to the hair-raising chamber operas *Miss Donnithorne's Maggot* and *Eight Songs*

Pots and piano: Ninfea Cruttwell-Reade is a composer Psappha enjoys working with

for a Mad King. The relationship flourished after Maxwell Davies became Psappha's patron in 1995, and culminated in their 2012 recording of the latter, which has just been re-released on the group's own label.

'I'm the only survivor from 1991,' Williams says of Psappha's original line-up, though clarinettist Dov Goldberg and cellist Jennifer Langridge, both of whom joined in 1993, aren't far behind. Flautist Conrad Marshall followed in 2001, violinist Benedict Holland ten years after that, and pianist Benjamin Powell, who is taking over from Williams as artistic director, in 2014. 'It's incredible, really. I'm a very loyal person and the players have been very loyal to the group, which is how it should be. It means you can develop and learn new things together,' Williams says. For repertoire beyond the 'Pierrot' lineup, Psappha can grow up to as many as 30 players. 'There's a fantastic pool of freelancers in Manchester who we have a very close relationship with. When there's the volume of opportunities for performers we've got here in Manchester now, a network of players develops to support it. If there was no outlet, no work, they wouldn't stay. But now there's plenty to hang around for.'

Psappha has commissioned more than 500 new works over the past three decades, an average of more than 15 each year. 'Choosing who and what to commission is a very personal thing,' Williams explains. 'The way I've always done it is to speak to the players, ask whose music has excited them, or who from one of our schemes for student composers do they want to hear do something bigger.' Williams points to Edinburgh-based Ninfea Cruttwell-Reade as a recent example. The group were impressed by her originality and practical thinking when she brought her piece for piano and flowerpots (complete with a suitcase of the latter) to a workshop of pieces for piano and percussion. 'We commissioned her to write a piece for us to play with sitarist Jasdeep Singh Degun,' he says. 'By supporting her to write an application for funding from the PRS, we helped her to buy her own sitar and have lessons on it with Jasdeep. The result, *Patdeep Studies* for sitar, strings and timpani, was just fantastic.'

> Ninfea Cruttwell-Reade brought her piece for piano and flowerpots to a Psappha workshop

All composers commissioned to write for Psappha are offered two workshops with the group, something Williams thinks gives everyone a chance to feel more confident about the music. 'Workshops aren't just useful for student composers – established artists benefit from them just as much,' he says. 'Whoever it is that's written a piece for us, it's likely there will be one or two bits that don't quite work. Trying things out together lets the composer write for the players as individuals and take risks they might not feel able to otherwise.' He's similarly keen for composers to develop their ▶

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Castles and seabirds
Tim Williams's final bow

At Hallé St Peter's (above), Psappha's final concert with Tim Williams as artistic director opened with new works by Ben Gaunt and Derri Joseph Lewis (above). Gaunt's *All the Castles I have Ever Loved*, an almost cartoonish string sextet evocation, remained tantalisingly abstract, while guitarist Tom McKinney spun the delicate and colourful threads of Lewis's *...BREATHE...* into an intricate, intriguing whole. Both works were bold, clear-headed and original – unlike Anna Thorvaldsdottir's meandering *Sola* for viola and electronics, despite Alex Mitchell's diligent and assured performance.

Orkney, where Psappha's long-time champion Peter Maxwell Davies spent much of his life, formed a visual backdrop to works by Lisa Robertson, Nina Danon, Athanasia Kontou, Electra Perivolaris and, finally, Maxwell Davies himself. Williams's five short but transfixing films of seabird colonies and towering rock formations complemented scores which made the bewitching scenery feel at once distant and close at hand, as if the spray of the North Atlantic were suspended in the springtime Mancunian air.
Tom Stewart

A strong network: Psappha with Maxwell Davies; (below) pianist Benjamin Powell will take over as artistic director

relationship with the audience: 'I don't think that the situation of having a group play a piece and the composer only appearing for their bow at the end is particularly satisfactory. I generally insist that they stand up beforehand and introduce their music, so the audience get to see a bit of their personality and have a way into the score.'

It will come as news to precisely no one that decades of government neglect now pose an existential threat to music in UK state schools. Where Williams's music teacher at a 'rough comp' in 1980s Liverpool wrote the promising young percussionist a xylophone concerto, today many schools struggle to offer any music provision at all. Psappha is behind a number of resources to support classroom music teachers and introduce school students to the compositional process, the latest of which is a pilot programme for Year 5 students in Merseyside developed in partnership with the New York Philharmonic. 'When I discovered their Very Young Composers scheme I knew something similar – which doesn't require the kids to have any musical training, but which gives them total control – would be perfect for us,' Williams says. 'We've just recruited four teaching artists who will work with students in Sefton and Knowsley, where I went to school. The training they get from the New York Phil will help them support the kids to write all the music themselves, whether that's with a graphic score or something else. We'll film it and use the footage to create musical postcards for the kids in New York, who'll send their postcards to our students in Merseyside.' Williams hopes the scheme will be rolled out over wider areas to give a 'leg up' to children whose parents might be choosing between heating their house or feeding their family – and for whom music education may seem a distant prospect.

> 'The players are very loyal to the group, which is how it should be. It means you can develop and learn things together'

If you're looking for a testament to Williams's tireless efforts to help young composers develop their work, then head straight to Psappha's YouTube channel. It features hundreds of beautiful videos shot and produced by Williams that show the full range of the ensemble's work, including concerts, workshop performances and short introductions from the composers themselves. 'It's possible to reach a global audience today in a way that just wasn't possible when we started out,' he says. 'Back then we relied on getting the word out via reviews, hoping that the national press would pick up on something we did.' Giving composers a professional recording of their work that they can share online offers them a brilliant opportunity to present their music to new audiences. 'That's the whole ethos of the group,' Williams continues. 'It doesn't matter if the music is by 95-year-old Betsy Jolas or a nine-year-old in Liverpool – we want it to be heard.'

Advertisement feature

Hyun-Kyung Lee, Piano

Susie Choi, Viola; Ian Lim Xin Ze, Harp; Rebecca Park, Flute

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Since its inception in 2016, the House Concert series has showcased some of the finest UK-based classical music talent from Korea. Curated with the Royal College of Music, The Guildhall School of Music & Drama and the Royal Academy of Music, this partnership has been an excellent platform for supporting emerging Korean artists to gain more opportunities and to get closer to local audiences.

Jungwoo Lee

Jungwoo Lee, the KCCUK director, has emphasised the importance of encouraging and supporting classical music's brightest young stars and the most exceptional emerging artists from Korea. As part of this commitment, he has invited emerging Korean artists not only based in the UK but also further afield to perform. Under Lee, the KCCUK is striving to present the best of Korean music to UK audiences. Here is all you need to know about the House Concert series.

A wide programme of performances

The House Concert series runs in partnership with St James's Church, one of the oldest churches and most highly regarded concert venues in Central London. In addition to this stunning venue, there are often performances held throughout the UK as part of different festivals.

Narae Kim

House Concert programme director Narae Kim has created a programme that combines classical music with Korean art genres. Kim has a passion for introducing Korean composers to UK audiences and this year's House Concert series offers an excellent opportunity for young classical musicians to not only showcase their excellent musical ability but also to bring the classical genre to a wider audience.

The June programme

KCC UK will present June's House Concert in collaboration with KCC Hungary. The House Concert, taking place at 7pm on 16 June at St James' Church, Piccadilly, will feature the Flarpiola Trio from Royal College of Music performing Debussy's Sonata, Dubois's Terzettino, Horovitz's Arabesque as well as a selection of encore songs. Pianist Hyun-Kyung Lee from the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music in Budapest, Hungary, will play J.S. Bach's Piano Partita No. 2 in C minor, BWV 826 and Debussy's Clair de Lune. She will also perform Musica Ricercata by Hungarian-Austrian composer G. Ligeti. This line-up is a fantastic opportunity to experience an inspiring, varied and carefully curated programme – free of charge.

Learn more about the Korean Cultural Centre and the House Concert series at kccuk.org.uk/houseconcert or for general enquiries please email info@kccuk.org.uk

MUSICAL DESTINATIONS

Prussia Cove, Cornwall

In the 50 years since its inception, the International Musicians Seminar has cultivated a strong sense of community, finds *Charlotte Smith*

Group dynamic: Thomas Adès coaches the De Beauvoir Piano Trio in 2022; (right) artistic director Steven Isserlis at Prussia Cove in 2014

The windswept Cornish coast is home to some remarkable coves and beaches – some expansive, sandy and family-friendly, some rugged and rocky with swift tides and crashing waves. Prussia Cove, named after the famous 18th-century smuggler and self-styled 'King of Prussia' John Carter, is small and secluded, with rock pools, a cave and granite fishing huts built into the side of the cliffs. There's also a long, deep gully which forms a miniature natural harbour. For those brave enough to risk the bracing temperatures, this is a great spot for swimming and snorkelling on calmer days.

It's with this remote slice of seaside heaven that the Hungarian violinist Sándor Végh fell in love when invited to perform in Truro Cathedral by his student Hilary Tunstall-Behrens. 'Here is the perfect place,' he wrote. 'The sky, the sea, always the tide comes and goes… perhaps nature will help [musicians] ease their knotted rhythms, and breathe.' Thus, the International Musicians Seminar was born in 1972 – three weeks of masterclasses open to international conservatory-level students up to the age of 30, away from the distractions of the world. To this, Open Chamber Music seminars were added in 1975 in which students play alongside established artists, and in 1996 Végh invited cellist Steven Isserlis to become artistic director, a role he has performed with aplomb to the present day.

Of crucial importance to the IMS is its home of Porth-en-Alls House, a neo-Elizabethan building originally designed by architect Philip Tilden in collaboration with Tancred and Brian Tunstall-Behrens (uncle and father to Hilary) as a much larger mansion. Still owned by the Tunstall-Behrens family, the house's warren of rooms over three floors play host to simultaneous violin, viola, cello, piano and chamber music masterclasses during the day, and to impromptu chamber read-throughs in the evenings, while the grand dining hall, with its high, cathedral-like ceiling, is the perfect venue for communal meals, enabling professors, students and staff to sit side-by-side at long tables.

As the years have gone by, the IMS has forged strong ties with leading composers, including György Kurtág, Brett Dean, Jörg Widmann, Mark-Anthony Turnage and Thomas Adès, the latter of whom was one of eight professors at two sets of ten-day April 2022 sessions. Adès was also midway through composing a special chamber work to be played at IMS Prussia Cove's 50th birthday concert at London's Wigmore Hall on 26 November. Always innovative, the seminar had commissioned a new string quartet of instruments to be loaned to its alumni from luthiers Stefan-Peter Greiner and Mark Jennings too – and Jennings could be found in the Garden Room of Porth-en-Alls during April working on the set's cello.

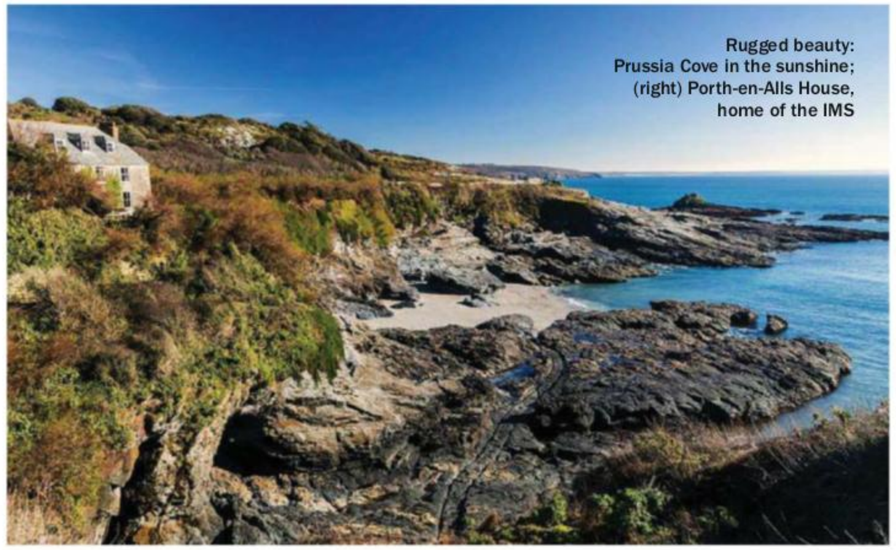
At the heart of everything, though, were the masterclasses, led in the first ten days by violinist Anthony Marwood, violist Lars Anders Tomter and cellist Steven Doane, alongside Adès – Isserlis would join violinist András Keller, violist Thomas Riebl and pianist Ferenc Rados for the second ten-day slot. Most striking was the sense of encouragement and support – students were urged to listen to their fellows' lessons and to join in discussions. In the upstairs Long Room, Marwood spoke of the beauty and transparency of a student's sound in Brahms, but asked her to access darker colours as gulls chimed in from outside a large bay window overlooking the cliffs. 'They found the words for me,' he quipped.

Meanwhile, in the Great Room, Doane worked on a student's own transcriptions of Schubert songs, leading to a discussion on translating German diction into bow strokes: 'The bows are breaths after all, so be more generous with your bow strokes – the direction of the bow is audible.' Outside in the Workshop, Adès was wresting with Brahms's First Piano Concerto: 'I thought you had the grandeur, but you might also want to capture the joy,' he said. And when the student asked about voicing in a tricky octave passage, he joked, 'I'd just worry about the notes at that point!'

From these masterclasses, select students would be hand-picked by their professors to perform in four public concerts in churches around Cornwall – and the professors themselves would give two 'Maestri' concerts, attended by the students. Falmouth's King Charles the Martyr played host to the first of these, featuring Adès in his own Three Mazurkas, Op. 27, and joined by Doane and Tomter for Brahms's Trio, Op. 114. It was a fitting way to conclude my visit to Prussia Cove – proof, as the applause rang out, that collaboration and respect bring out the very best in musicians young and old.

Further info: International Musicians Seminar: i-m-s.org.uk

'Perhaps nature will help musicians to ease their knotted rhythms, and breathe'



Rugged beauty: Prussia Cove in the sunshine; (right) Porth-en-Alls House, home of the IMS

'Harbour Under the Cliff'

Porth-en-Alls House

Construction on the main House of the Porth-en-Alls estate began in 1911, but was interrupted by World War I. Work resumed during 1918-20, though the full-scale granite-faced building, with its *Rittersaal* jutting over the sea-kissed rocks, was never realised – instead, just the west wing stands today.

Architect Philip Tilden brought in a host of joiners, masons and blacksmiths to work on the house, with its carved panelled doors, frames and floors. At his instigation, the entire project was undertaken in a spirit of cooperation, similar to the medieval guild system, whereby the architect 'must take off his top hat' and 'set to work in an apron with the other workmen'.

CLIVE BARDA/ARENA PAL, GETTY, ALAMY

Composer of the Week is broadcast on Radio 3 at 12pm, Monday to Friday. Programmes in June are:
30 May – 3 June Handel and the Hanoverians
6-10 June Holmès and Duparc (repeat)
13-17 June Dvořák
20-24 June Victoria
27 June – 1 July Billy Strayhorn (repeat)

Erich Korngold

Embracing youthful stardom, Nazi censorship and Hollywood success, the Austrian's story was truly remarkable, says *Jessica Duchen*

ILLUSTRATION: MATT HERRING

If Hollywood's scriptwriters had dreamed up Korngold's life story, they would probably have scrapped it as implausible. From childhood genius to the Hollywood golden age to the devastation of the post-war era, and then his belated present-day rehabilitation, it still seems nearly too startling to be true.

The sorry truth is that the Nazis' ban on music by Jewish composers, Korngold included, eradicated their music from much of Europe, and after a decade-long rupture restoration is difficult indeed. In the past few decades, though, Korngold's works have returned in force. Recent high-profile instances have included John Wilson's award-winning CD of the Symphony in F sharp, stunning chamber music recordings from the likes of the Jerusalem and Eusebius quartets, and the Bavarian State Opera's staging of *Die tote Stadt*. This summer, *Die tote Stadt* comes to Longborough Festival Opera – its first UK performance since 2009.

Born on 29 May 1897 in Brno, Moravia, Korngold was the younger son of Julius Korngold, who soon became the most powerful critic in Vienna, working for the influential *Neue freie Presse*. The chances of a leading critic having for a son the most gifted child prodigy composer since Mendelssohn would seem one in a billion. When Erich was nine, Julius took him to play to Gustav Mahler. 'A genius,' was the great man's assessment. He recommended that Erich should study with composer Alexander von Zemlinsky.

By 13, Erich had written, among other things, several fine piano works – *Don Quixote*, *Märchenbilder* and his Piano Sonata No. 1; his Piano Trio, Op.1; and a ballet-pantomime *Der Schneemann*. After Julius sent samples to the great and good of the music world beyond Vienna, praise poured in from Richard Strauss, Puccini, Humperdinck and more; soon *Der Schneemann* was performed at the Vienna Hofoper in front of visiting Belgian royalty, with little Erich on stage, taking a bow.

The teenage composer was a good-natured and precociously romantic soul with a quick wit, a sweet tooth and a resounding belief in inspiration.

Praise for the 13-year-old Korngold poured in from Richard Strauss, Puccini and others

Although his father kept him away from the excessively modern influences (as Julius saw them) of Schoenberg and Berg, Erich embraced with gusto the myriad possibilities of his own personal language.

As a prodigy, he was subject to jibing. Rumours flew about that a musician could only earn the father's praise by playing the son's music. Julius, horrified at being thought biased, responded by overcompensating. As Erich grew up, the resulting intrigues rebounded against him. For instance, his father was shredding Richard Strauss in print – but Strauss was joint intendant at the opera house and Erich's burgeoning career depended on his good opinion.

At 15, Korngold wrote his first one-act opera, *Der Ring des Polykrates*, and two years later a second, *Violanta*, making a double bill. Next came his first full-

Korngold's style

GETTY

Generous spirit: Korngold's all-embracing melodies, rich textures, harmonic sophistication and long-sustained dramatic intensity hold an instantly recognisable personality, influenced by Puccini, Strauss and the early ballets of Stravinsky (above). His orchestration is likewise full-blooded, glistening with percussion and keyboard instruments.

'Motif of the Cheerful Heart': Korngold's signature motif, invented in his teens, is two interlocked rising fourths and a rising fifth: optimistic and, yes, cheerful. He used it in most of his works in one form or another, but the Violin Concerto's opening theme transforms it, breaking its heart on the top note.

Landscapes and dreamscapes: Korngold was adept at creating atmosphere, building tension in film scores and operas alike. He can absorb the listener in the heady, claustrophobic quality of the Venetian setting in *Violanta*, or Bruges in the dream sequence of *Die tote Stadt*, replete with shadowy corners, church bells and a religious procession.

Technical wizardry: With Vienna's finest performers at his disposal, Korngold became accustomed to writing for virtuosos. His Violin Sonata was intended for Carl Flesch and Artur Schnabel, his operatic leading roles were conceived for singers such as Maria Jeritza, Lotte Lehmann, Jan Kiepura and Richard Tauber.

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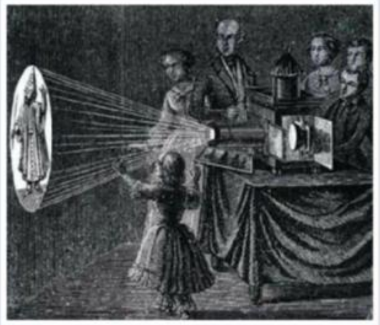
KORNGOLD Life&Times

1897



LIFE: Erich Korngold is born on 29 May into a Jewish family in Brno, the second son of the influential music critic Julius Korngold and Josefine Korngold, a pianist and amateur singer.

TIMES: Thomas Edison is granted a patent in the US for his ***kinetoscope***, a forerunner of the movie projector that allows a single viewer to watch a film through a peephole.

1910

LIFE: Conducted by Felix von Weingartner, the ***13-year-old Korngold***'s ballet *Der Schneemann* (The Snowman) is a spectacular success at its premiere at the Vienna Opera House.

TIMES: The world's first ever public radio broadcast is made from the Met Opera in New York, with singers including Enrico Caruso performing arias from *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci*.

1957

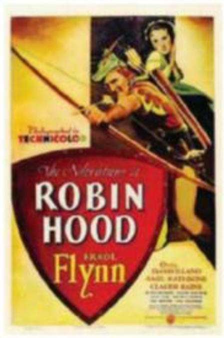
LIFE: His health impaired by a stroke the previous year, he dies on 29 November, aged 60. He is buried at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery.

TIMES: Playing a gig with The Quarrymen at St Peter's Church in Liverpool, ***John Lennon*** meets enthusiastic guitar-player Paul McCartney, who later joins the group himself.

1920

LIFE: His three-act opera *Die tote Stadt*, whose libretto is co-written by his father and himself, has simultaneous premieres in Hamburg and Cologne, conducted by Egon Pollak and Otto Klemperer respectively.

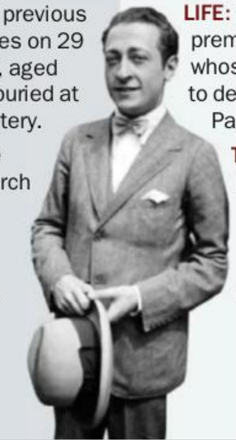
TIMES: On the same day that Adolf Hitler addresses its members in Munich, the German Workers Party changes its title to National Socialist German Workers' Party, or Nazi Party.



1934

LIFE: An invitation to Hollywood to supervise the music for a film of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* ignites a career as a film composer that will, in 1939, win him an Oscar for ***The Adventures of Robin Hood***.

TIMES: The death of Edward Elgar at the age of 76 in February is followed by those of fellow British composers Gustav Holst and Frederick Delius in May and June respectively.



1947

LIFE: His Violin Concerto is premiered by ***Jascha Heifetz***, whose performance leads Korngold to describe him as 'Caruso and Paganini in one person'.

TIMES: The Cold War effectively begins when US President Harry Truman announces The Truman Doctrine, a foreign policy aimed at preventing Soviet geopolitical expansion.

length opera, *Die tote Stadt*, which he began while serving in the First World War as musical director of his regiment. Based on the novella *Bruges-la-Morte* by the Belgian Symbolist poet Georges Rodenbach, the opera, with its sense of loss, lengthy dreamscape and ultimate catharsis, is at heart about coming to terms with grief. It became immensely and internationally popular in the interwar years.

Korngold, meanwhile, was in love with Luzi von Sonnenthal, a young actress from a well-known theatrical family. Julius's opposition to this marriage – indeed, any marriage that would take away his precious prodigy – was virulent enough to separate the pair for a long while. From this time sprang Korngold's incidental music for *Much Ado About Nothing*, the exquisite *Abschiedslieder* (Songs of Farewell) and the Piano Quintet, its slow movement a set of variations on one of the aforementioned songs, which included Korngold's 'Luzi' motif. The lovers finally married in 1924.

His next and most ambitious opera, *Das Wunder der Heliane*, was dedicated to Luzi. It is crammed with music of staggering beauty and complexity. While its dystopian setting is influenced by Expressionist cinema – premiered in 1927, it was contemporaneous with Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* – it is ultimately a gigantic celebration of conjugal love.

By the time *Heliane* was ready to perform, the Nazis were in the ascendant, diatribes were being written against 'degenerate' arts, and the arts were thumbing their noses by becoming as 'degenerate' as they possibly could. A rival opera appeared at the same time as *Heliane*: Ernst Krenek's *Jonny spielt auf* – modernist, angular, down to earth, it could scarcely have been more different. Julius, fearing that Erich's opera would be overshadowed, was so determined to bad-mouth Krenek's work that he, a Jewish music critic, enlisted the help of a Nazi broadsheet to denounce it. He succeeded only in sparking a backlash – against *Heliane*. Noisy protests from Nazis in the theatre were more threatening still.

Now Korngold had a young family to support, and he needed to break away from his insupportable father. He took a post arranging and conducting operetta at the Theater an der Wien, and here met the theatre director Max Reinhardt, who became a colleague and close friend.

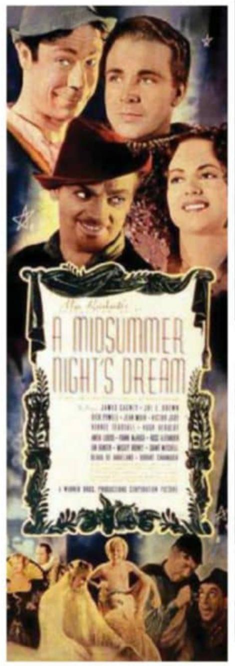
When the Nazis came to power in 1933, Reinhardt left for the US. Korngold, from a secular, assimilated Jewish family, did not immediately anticipate that the danger would extend to Vienna. He began a fifth opera, *Die Kathrin*, not recognising that its story would be political dynamite: a German girl falls in love with a French soldier. Eventually a rewrite made Kathrin Swiss instead. That, however, scuppered the dramatic tension. Full of melodic tenderness, the opera deserves an overhaul and a better fate.

An invitation from Reinhardt arrived in the nick of time. Filming his Hollywood Bowl production of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Warner Brothers in 1933-34, he asked Korngold to join him to arrange Mendelssohn's music for the movie. There, head of the studio Jack Warner persuaded Korngold to try writing original scores. Soon he was commuting between Vienna and Hollywood.

His first full-length film score was for the swashbuckler *Captain Blood*, starring Errol Flynn and Olivia de Havilland; he also wrote a musical, *Give Us This Night*, for Jan Kiepura, the dynamic Polish tenor who had sung the male lead in *Das Wunder der Heliane*. In the Errol Flynn film *Another Dawn*, he found a home for an ecstatic melody representing the freedom of flight and of love, and *The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex* contains an idea he later recycled in the devastating slow movement of his Symphony in F sharp.

In March 1938, he was in Hollywood scoring *The Adventures of Robin Hood* when the Nazis marched into Vienna. His parents and elder son, Ernst, managed to escape to California. The Viennese premiere of *Die Kathrin* was scheduled for that same month, but was cancelled – along with all Korngold's works thereafter.

Korngold saw his films as 'operas without singing' and drew no distinction between writing in this genre and any other. He brought the techniques of Wagner, Strauss and Puccini into the cinema and, along with his fellow emigrés in Hollywood such as Max Steiner and Franz Waxman, helped to turn film music into an art in its own right. He was rewarded with two Oscars.



Big screen success: (far right) Korngold with *Magic Fire* actresses Yvonne De Carlo and Valentina Cortese, 1954; (right) the poster for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1934

GETTY

The downside, however, was that when a film left public view, so did his music. Then, in time, the quality of the movies he was asked to score deteriorated. When, in 1946, he gave up film scores, a journalist asked him why. 'When I first came to Hollywood, I could not understand the dialogue,' Korngold quipped. 'Now I can.'

Korngold was damned for writing Romantic music in a modernist age

After Julius died in 1945, Korngold had felt stricken, aware that his father had not lived to see him return to serious composition. Julius had browbeaten him continually, ranting in lengthy letters about his supposed betrayal of his art. According to Ernst Korngold, Erich had vowed not to compose again for the concert hall until Hitler had been defeated.

In hospital after a heart attack, still in his forties, he began to dream up his Symphonic Serenade for strings; and he was slowly working on a violin concerto for Bronisław Huberman. The violinist died before it was finished, and only when Jascha Heifetz expressed interest did Korngold complete it. Its opening melody is the flight/love theme from *Another Dawn* – which Korngold had envisaged as a concerto theme years before the film.

The public loved the concerto. The critics didn't. 'This is a Hollywood concerto,' spluttered one review after Heifetz premiered it in 1947. The attacks on Korngold quickly became as cruel as they were short-sighted. He was damned for writing Romantic music in a modernist age, and Hollywood was perceived to taint his art with commercial concerns – a real insult when much of his income went towards supporting fellow refugees.

The Korngolds attempted to return to Vienna in 1950 but here, too, his music was dogged with ill fortune, and it seems sadly likely that some positions of power in the musical establishment were still held by ex-Nazis. Korngold himself blamed, among other things, the dominant vogue for music in which calculated intellect trumped inspiration. After retreating to Hollywood, he died of a brain hemorrhage on 29 November 1957, aged only 60.

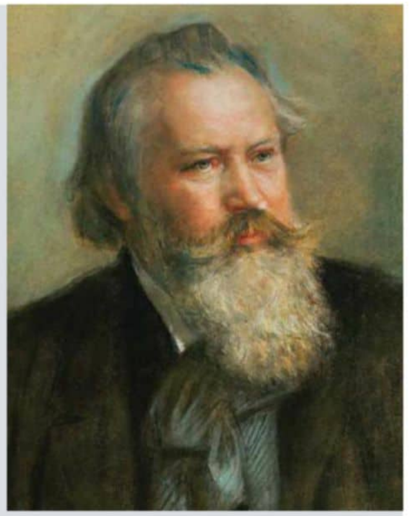
Bitterness is tangible in his last major work, his Symphony in F sharp – neither major nor minor. The tragic slow movement was often assumed to be a lament for the Holocaust and the fate of Europe. He denied this, but it is difficult to hear it without remembering that context. Today it also stands as an emblem for the losses suffered as World War II, and the chilly zeitgeist that followed it, obliterated the work of so many gifted composers. Now it is up to us to find them again.

Building a library

Johannes Brahms

Symphony No. 3

Terry Williams finds the best recordings of Brahms's Third, one of the composer's greatest triumphs yet one of his most paradoxical pieces



The composer

Brahms begins his Third Symphony with F – A flat – F, identified by his biographer Max Kalbeck to stand for his motto 'frei aber froh' (free but happy). Certainly, the 50-year-old composer was single at the time of the work's premiere in 1883, as he would remain for the rest of his life, and he was also enjoying something of a creative peak which would see the Fourth Symphony follow hot on the Third's heels. The year before, he had begun what would prove a fruitful and fulfilling relationship with the Meiningen Court Orchestra and its music director Hans von Bülow, his staunchest champion.

BBC RADIO 3 **Building a Library** is broadcast on Radio 3 at 9.30am each Saturday as part of *Record Review*. A highlights podcast is available on BBC Sounds.

The work

Johannes Brahms fought shy of writing a symphony. What was there left to say after Beethoven? When he eventually got around to it, the First Symphony of 1876 proved so successful that he wasted no time in producing a Second. A six year symphonic silence then followed before his Third Symphony was heard. Begun in 1882 during a vacation in Wiesbaden and finished the next summer, its premiere, given by Hans Richter and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, was one of Brahms's greatest triumphs – all the more surprising as the Third Symphony is anything but a gallery pleaser.

By the time of that premiere, the once debonair composer and very model of a 19th-century Romantic poet had long since morphed into the luxuriantly bearded and portly Johannes Brahms. Although modest by nature, he perhaps felt a certain gravitas was required if he were to look the part of the celebrated composer who had not only written a wealth of songs, choral, chamber and solo piano music, but also two acclaimed symphonies, two epic piano concertos, a violin concerto of Beethovenian stature and a much admired *Ein deutsches Requiem*.

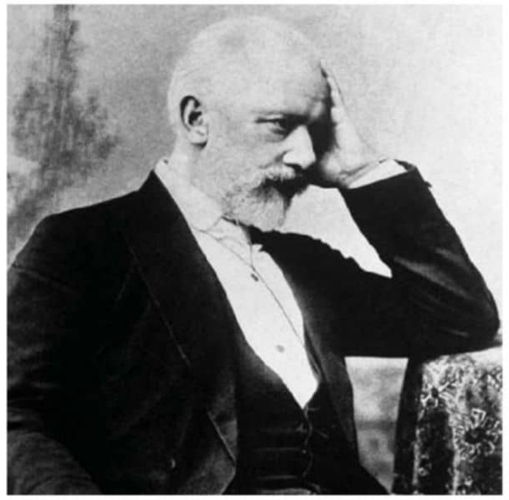
The conductor and pianist Hans von Bülow, his benefactor and friend and founder of the Meiningen Court Orchestra which programmed many of his works, hailed him as 'after Bach and Beethoven, the greatest, the most sublime of all composers', a sentiment not shared by Brahms's Russian contemporary Tchaikovsky, who infamously dubbed him 'a talentless bastard'. The composer and music critic Hugo Wolf dismissed the symphonies as 'disgustingly stale and prosy, fundamentally false and perverse'. Even today, Brahms remains one of the most divisive of composers.

It was Brahms's Vienna, a city permanently at war with itself, which had originally drawn up the battle lines. The composer found himself in the cross-fire between two opposing claques. His detractors condemned him as regressive, a spent force compared to his fashionable contemporaries Wagner and Liszt. However, in a 1933 lecture, no less a visionary than Schoenberg, main protagonist in the avant-garde Second Viennese School, would laud Brahms as not only a leading torch-bearer for the tradition of German music from Bach onwards but also as a vital link in the development of Western music. Whatever one's viewpoint, history has deemed his four symphonies sufficient to earn him a place among the greatest of symphonic composers, the Third perhaps closest to an inner portrait of this complex, Janus-like figure.

After the heroism of the First Symphony and the pastoral flavours of the Second (and prefacing the inherent tragedy of the Fourth), the Third inhabits a more uncertain world. Unlike its predecessors, it offers no triumphant conclusion. Instead, it asks questions that go largely unanswered. All four movements end quietly, unprecedented in symphonic literature at that time.

> Unlike its predecessors, Brahms's Third offers no triumphant conclusion, but asks questions

The Third is the most Schumann-esque of the Brahms Symphonies, the one which mirrors Robert Schumann's description of his own psychological make-up as both Florestan and Eusebius ('impulsive and spontaneous' and 'inward and thoughtful'). Twenty-seven years after Schumann's death, Brahms pays affectionate homage to his one-time mentor and friend with a quotation from the opening movement of the 'Rhenish', Schumann's own Third Symphony of 1850. The *Allegro con brio* of Brahms's symphony is rich in rhythmic and lyrical invention, embracing a wide range of feeling from euphoria to melancholy.



A divisive composer: (anti-clockwise) Robert and Clara Schumann inspired Brahms; Hans von Bülow admired him; Tchaikovsky did not

GETTY, ALAMY

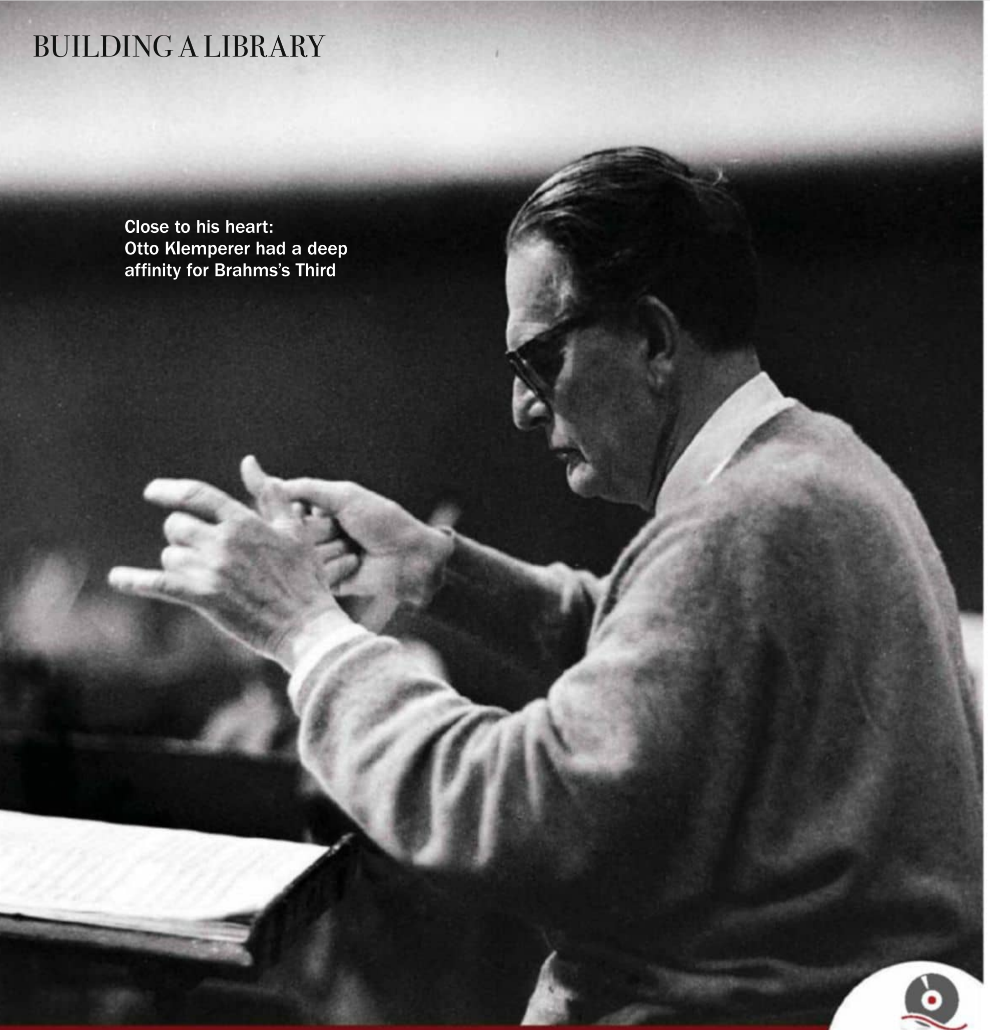
Third man: Hans Richter conducted the premiere

Brahms asks for a repeat of the brief exposition – without it, the listener misses the heightened sense of excitement before the development leaps in. After a turbulent ride, the music comes to rest with a gentle reminder of the opening motto theme.

The clarinet-led *Andante* has its moments of serenity, although they do not conceal an undercurrent of regret. Near its end, however, the violins are given the chance to shine with an ecstatic crescendo of joy before the coda is allowed to dissolve into silence. Perhaps the tenderly nostalgic *Poco allegretto* that follows is a song of farewell to Schumann's widow, Clara, the love that had once consumed the young Brahms for his friend and muse having never completely faded.

The finale begins confidently but storm clouds soon gather. After many mood and rhythmic twists, and what feels like the prospect of a triumphant finish, it eventually comes full circle, ending with a soft echo of the symphony's opening bars. As dusk falls, it is Brahms the 'inward and thoughtful' one who has the final word, at least for the time being. The Fourth Symphony would tell a different story.

Turn the page to discover our recommended recordings of Brahms's Symphony No. 3



Close to his heart: Otto Klemperer had a deep affinity for Brahms's Third

A fleet and deeply felt performance

The best recording

Otto Klemperer *(conductor)*
Philharmonia Orchestra
Warner Classics 404 3382

The Third is the most difficult of the Brahms Symphonies to bring off, which may explain the small number of wholly successful recordings. Even the great Arturo Toscanini never really 'cracked' it – though if you do want to hear him, make sure it's the live Philharmonia recording and not his regimented NBC Symphony Orchestra account. Others fall just short of the top spot for omitting the important first movement repeat – as well as Bruno Walter (see right), these include John Barbirolli and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, who are otherwise on simply glorious form, and William Steinberg's superb account with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, though their performance is so compelling that one can almost forgive said omission.

If you want a full but not over-cushioned Brahmsian sound, you won't do better than to go for Riccardo Chailly's live 2013 set of the symphonies with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, beautifully recorded on their own turf. Their Third is painted in glowing colours appropriate for a work often characterised as autumnal.

> There is nothing chilly about this honest but deeply felt realisation of the score

Leading the field, though, is Otto Klemperer in his 1957 Kingsway Hall recording with the Philharmonia. Contrary to expectations – his tempos were usually on the sluggish side – Klemperer doesn't hang about, and throughout all four movements the music flows quite swiftly. He divides his violins to dramatic effect and observes the exposition repeat. He could also be a cool customer, but there is nothing chilly about this honest but deeply felt realisation of the score, even though it veers more towards the Classical rather than the Romantic end of the musical spectrum.

This is essentially a symphony for winds and the peerless Philharmonia woodwind choir needs no encouragement to pour out. A review of the stereo LP even complained that the opening bars were too full of oboes, but in fact the overall orchestral balance is pretty good. The original sound quality was perhaps rather acerbic but in its present refurbished form has both clarity and warmth.

Brahms's Third was a work close to Klemperer's heart and he performed it in what turned out to be his final concert in 1971. This is available on disc in hazy, 'off-air' mono sound and probably of interest mainly to Klemperer completists. The earlier account is in a higher league altogether, with conductor and orchestra captured at their peak and leaving all comers in its shadow.

Three other great recordings

Bruno Walter (conductor)
In their Indian summers, Klemperer and Walter became polar opposites. This 1960 account of the Third with the Columbia Symphony Orchestra has all the musical qualities associated with late Walter, most of all a humanity and generosity of spirit which shines through in every bar – he smiles more often than his grim-faced contemporary. However, there is also plenty of backbone here. Though Walter doesn't include the exposition repeat – which is a pity – this is still one to cherish, with very good stereo sound quality. (*Sony SMK 64471*).

Wilhelm Furtwängler (conductor)
Furtwängler was a creative artist who seemed not so much to interpret but to disassemble then recompose the scores in front of him. He described the Brahms Symphonies as 'a wild, fantastic and even demonic universe', which is what he conjures up in this Berlin Philharmonic recording. The opening bars are volcanic, erupting in a lava flow of angry sound, and near the start of the finale, an unsettled Berlin audience is momentarily stunned by a coronary-inducing blast from the trombones – this is not a performance for the faint-hearted. The sound quality on this 1949 recording is also surprisingly good. (*Warner Classics 9029545104*)

Claudio Abbado (conductor)
By following the Meiningen Court tradition of smaller-scale Brahms performance, Paavo Berglund and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe offer many insights, as do Charles Mackerras and Robin Ticciati, both with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, and Thomas Dausgaard with the Swedish Chamber Orchestra. However, for all their merits, none of them displace Claudio Abbado's fine-sounding 1989 recording with the Berlin Philharmonic, which combines similar transparency with orchestral heft. (*DG 429 7652*)

And one to avoid...

The Vienna Philharmonic apparently adored Leonard Bernstein, but alas, their 1981 recording of Brahms's Third isn't one of their greatest. The conductor's apparent stifling love of the score results in him lavishing it with such attention that nothing ever simply flows – it all sounds more laboured than it should. The orchestra makes beautiful sounds but this alone doesn't add up to a convincing performance.

GETTY

Seventh heaven: Marin Alsop conducts Dvořák; (below) Czech composer Jan Kalivoda

Continue the journey...

We suggest five works to explore after Brahms's Third Symphony...

A little over a year after writing his Third Symphony, ***Brahms*** completed his Fourth, bringing his cycle to a glorious conclusion. Described by the critic Eduard Hanslick as 'like a dark well; the longer we look into it, the more brightly the stars shine back', the Fourth's moments of stellar brilliance include the final movement's superbly crafted passacaglia (**Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra/Riccardo Chailly** *Decca 436 4662*).

Comparison is often made between the buoyant opening of Brahms's Third and that of the 'Rhenish' Symphony No. 3 by his older friend ***Robert Schumann***. That Brahms was staying near the River Rhine as he wrote his Third may possibly have brought back happy memories that, before we are taken into more reflective territory in the later movements, infuses the symphony with an initial sense of good humour and well being. (**Swedish Chamber Orchestra/Thomas Dausgaard** *BIS BISSACD1619*).

'What magnificent melodies there are for the finding!' wrote an enormously impressed ***Dvořák*** when Brahms played him the first and last movements of his Third in October

1883. The Czech composer was inspired to embark on his own Seventh Symphony the following year, completing this work of capricious mood swings, rich orchestral colour and moments of folk-like charm in early 1885. (**Baltimore Symphony Orchestra/Marin Alsop** *Naxos 8.572112*).

> Kalivoda's Fifth combines catchy lyricism with the occasional dark corner

Try also ***Jan Kalivoda***, a Czech composer from the generation before Brahms and Dvořák who was admired by Schumann. His Fifth Symphony of 1840 is a work of catchy lyricism, joyful self-confidence and the occasional dark corner that give an inkling of what was to come from those two greats later in the century. (**Das Neue Orchester/Christoph Spering** *CPO 777 1392*).

And for a German near-contemporary of Brahms's Third, there's the Fifth Symphony by ***Joachim Raff***, premiered in Berlin in October 1873. Subtitled 'Lenore', the work was inspired by a poem by Gottfried August Bürger about a soldier who leaves his beloved for war, only to return to her after his death. Both dramatic and richly melodic, the symphony culminates in a sumptuous yet ultimately restrained chorale. (**Orchestre de la Suisse Romande/Neeme Järvi** *Chandos CHSA5135*).

Reviews

Recordings and books rated by expert critics

Welcome

Debuts and discoveries abound this month, with first studio recordings from The Castalian Quartet (see Recording of the Month), soprano Rachel Willis-Sørensen and violinist Esther Abrami. There's another landmark project from pianist Samantha Ege, who premieres works by a selection of overlooked Black women composers, plus chamber works by Ruth Gipps and a new opera from Jeanine Tesori.

We've big-boned ballet from Simon Rattle and the LSO, another triumphant recording from John Wilson and the Sinfonia of London, plus fine turns from powerhouse pianists Jean-Efflam Bavouzet, Steven Osborne, Mitsuko Uchida and Grigory Sokolov. And if you like something a little vintage, check out our Historical round-up.

Michael Beek *Reviews editor*

This month's critics

John Allison, Nicholas Anderson, Michael Beek, Kate Bolton-Porciatti, Geoff Brown, Michael Church, Christopher Cook, Martin Cotton, Christopher Dingle, Misha Donat, Jessica Duchen, Rebecca Franks, George Hall, Malcolm Hayes, Julian Haylock, Claire Jackson, Daniel Jaffé, Stephen Johnson, Berta Joncus, Erik Levi, Natasha Loges, David Nice, Roger Nichols, Bayan Northcott, Ingrid Pearson, Steph Power, Anthony Pryer, Paul Riley, Jan Smaczny, Sarah Urwin Jones, Kate Wakeling, Helen Wallace, Alexandra Wilson, Barry Witherden

KEY TO STAR RATINGS

★★★★★ Outstanding
★★★★ Excellent
★★★ Good
★★ Disappointing
★ Poor

RECORDING OF THE MONTH

Time is of the essence in this assured debut

The Castalian Quartet takes the listener on a philosophical journey in its beautiful and original first album, says *Kate Wakeling*

Between Two Worlds

Lassus: La nuit froide et sombre (arr. Simonen); **Beethoven:** String Quartet No. 15 in A minor, Op. 132; **Thomas Adès:** The Four Quartets; **Dowland:** Come Heavy Sleep (arr. Simonen)
The Castalian String Quartet
Delphian DCD34272 66:43 mins

This outstanding disc offers listeners a true philosophical journey. Perceptively programmed, *Between Two Worlds* explores the mystic properties of time through a series of intricately connected works, each performed with rare beauty and originality by a quartet working at the height of its powers.

The disc opens with a mesmerising, near-whispered performance of Lassus's 'La nuit froide et sombre' (arranged by the quartet's own first violinist Sini Simonen) which charts the cycle of night and day as a mirror of the human propensity to oscillate between hope and despair. From here, we move to Beethoven's String Quartet No. 15 in A minor, Op. 132, a piece which travels 'from the terrestrial to the celestial and back'. This work, the second of Beethoven's five late quartets, was composed in the summer of 1825, just two years before the composer's death. By now, Beethoven's hearing loss was profound and he was intermittently stricken with a horribly painful intestinal problem. The score reflects it all with heartrending intensity, in the words of Simonen 'moving from the anguished to the heavenly before crashing back to earthly suffering'.

The Castalian Quartet is intimately alive to every shift of colour and mood in this extraordinary score and succeeds in conjuring the sense of both deep contemplation and vivid spontaneity. The quartet is especially daring with timbre, sometimes stripping back the sound to viol-like clarity while also being unafraid to dig in with a refreshing rawness when the score so demands. The quartet's rendering of the work's monumental third movement – subtitled *Heiliger Dankgesang eines Genesenen an die Gottheit, in der lydischen Tonart* (Song of Thanksgiving from a Convalescent to the Divinity, in the Lydian mode) – is nothing short of a revelation in its lucidity of line and sheer beauty of sound.

The score of this same Beethoven quartet was reportedly spread across TS Eliot's desk as he worked on his seminal *Four Quartets*. In turn, these four poems have a powerful if elusive connection to Thomas Adès's bold and mysterious *The Four Quarters* (2010), which charts the progress of a day before 'breaking free of time altogether'. The Castalian Quartet here draws out all the wondrous strangeness of Adès's work, from the eery chatter of 'Nightfalls' to the criss-cross of pizzicato in 'Morning Dew'. The final movement, 'The Twenty-fifth Hour', is propelled by an array of fiendish rhythmic sequences in 25/16 time and the quartet handles this mind-boggling complexity with total assurance to unleash a wonderfully wild zeal, before the score thins to fragile harmonics and the ensemble is once more a picture of poise.

> The quartet handles Adès's mind-boggling complexity with total assurance

Fittingly enough, the disc ends where it began with a return to the Renaissance – this time a soulful account of Dowland's lute song 'Come, Heavy Sleep'.

The album is further enhanced by Andrew Mellor's terrific sleeve notes which draw together the philosophical strands of the programme with clarity and insight. This is indeed a special release from Delphian and the Castalian Quartet which deserves the very highest praise.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

It's about time: The Castalian String Quartet recording *Between Two Worlds*

WILL COATES-GIBSON/FOXBRUSH, PAUL MARC MITCHELL

BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE CHOICE

An interview with Sini Simonen

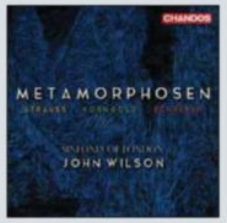
What was your starting point for this project?
It was one of those pandemic projects, where you suddenly have a lot of time and you are just wondering about the world. I got into reading TS Eliot, and we'd played the Adès a lot, which I knew was a reflection on Eliot's *Four Quartets*. I was moved by the masterful depiction of his experience of time. We've loved Beethoven's Op. 132 for many years, and I think TS Eliot also loved it. There is this transcendental quality, or something beyond time. So I guess I was just playing around with ideas when we were suddenly in a completely different reality.

Would this album have been different without the pandemic?
I think this was always on the cards, but there were a few things. We love French music, we love Haydn; it could have been many things. But I think it probably wouldn't have been this, because I don't think I would have had so much time to read, think, play around with ideas and just wonder.

Tell us about your decision to arrange the Lassus and Dowland pieces...
I love Renaissance vocal music, so I was thinking what might work for string quartet. I was drawn, of course, to their incredible beauty, but also to the words, because they are about the passage of time. One sort of emerges from the night into the day, and then the other one is kind of depicting the night as a metaphor for death. I've never done anything like it before!

Sini Simonen is first violin in the Castalian Quartet

ORCHESTRAL CHOICE



A powerful and eloquent performance

David Nice **applauds the Sinfonia of London's Strauss, Korngold and Schreker**

Metamorphosen

R Strauss: Metamorphosen;
Korngold: Symphonic Serenade;
Schreker: Intermezzo
Sinfonia of London/John Wilson
Chandos CHSA 5292 (CD/SACD)
64:22 mins

Context matters: I listened to this *Metamorphosen*, composed as a memorial to what Richard Strauss described in his diary as 'irreplaceable monuments of architecture and works of art… destroyed by a criminal soldiery' (he meant the Nazis, not the Allies), as news was coming in of the massacre in Bucha. So the tears were bound to roll. Objectively, though, this is a deep and powerful interpretation of a great masterpiece. Wilson's 23 Sinfonia of London strings are some of the best in the world (if only the players were listed); the solos have supreme eloquence, the perfectly-released dynamics, top-to-bottom sonorousness and staggered entries reinforce how Strauss achieves his impact.

> Wilson's 23 string players are some of the best in the world

The programme, typically for Wilson, is a fascinating one. Schreker's 1900 *Intermezzo* is just that, but strains for more shades between the lines, anticipating Korngold's *Symphonic Serenade* completed nearly half a century later. Having returned from Hollywood to Europe, Korngold dedicated the score to 'Luzi, my beloved wife, my dear friend'. It is anything but 'light music', least of all in the big *Lento religioso*, where the melody line takes so many unexpected turns; and the searing anguish Wilson's players express at its heart shows why you need a great, large string section. The finale seems perfunctory after that, but the first two movements also show that Korngold hadn't given up on individuality. The acoustics of St Augustine's Church Kilburn, perfect for the Strauss, sometimes diffuse the focus here. But all of the playing is absolutely first-rate.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Conductor-curator: John Wilson yet again puts together a fascinating programme

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Bacewicz

Divertimento; Sinfonietta; Symphony; Concerto
Amadeus Chamber Orchestra of Polish Radio/Agnieszka Duczmal
DUX DUX 1828 54:53 mins

In a posthumously published collection of autobiographical anecdotes, Grażyna Bacewicz wrote: 'I normally do not walk but run; I speak fast; even my pulse beats faster than others.' So it does in the music this major Polish composer wrote, certainly in the outer movements of the spirited string pieces collected here, ranging from the 1935 Sinfonietta, when she was just past her student years in Paris, to an even more pungent Divertimento, written 30 years later. The music's rhythmic vitality, wonderfully amplified in these gutsy vintage performances (the oldest is from 2004), is the most obvious sign of Bacewicz's uniquely determined spirit, though her slow movements, whether reflective or anguished, never show any loss of muscle.

Whatever the stylistic influences at work – Baroque, neo-classical, early-20th-century French – her bright ideas keep bubbling out, sometimes poured into vessels too small to reap their full benefit (the three-movement Divertimento lasts just over six minutes). She luckily gives herself more room to breathe in the Concerto and Symphony, kaleidoscopic and vital post-war pieces from the 1940s, and among her most impressive.

Agnieszka Duczmal and her Amadeus Chamber Orchestra plunge into every work with tremendous fire and flair: if the movements are marked 'vivo', they really move fast, though not at the expense of ensemble precision. The acoustic of the University Auditorium, Poznán, might lend the performances a little shrill edge, but who wants to sink into plush velvet with music and music-making this dynamic and full of life? *Geoff Brown*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★

Fire and flair: Agnieszka Duczmal is bold in Bacewicz

CHRIS CHRISTODOULOU, KAMIL BABKA, GETTY

Sibelius

Symphonies Nos 2 & 4
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra/Owain Arwel Hughes
Rubicon RCD 1072 87:04 mins

In great works so multifariously recorded as these, the pretext for yet further interpretations can only be that the performers feel they have something new to say about them. It seems that Owain Arwel Hughes's main idea is to take things rather steadily – though never so slowly as such extremists as Bernstein or Leif Segerstam. In Symphony No. 4's dark, fragmentary slow movement, his careful pacing enables a real tension to accumulate as the players of the Royal Philharmonic feel their way from one fraught phrase to another. Yet that same carefulness robs the finale of much of its wonted urgency and climactic struggle – a disappointment underlined by Hughes's resort to that dubious tradition – unsupported by Sibelius's score – of drastically slowing down the bleak final pages.

Again, the relatively ample unfolding of the *Allegretto* opening of Symphony No. 2 goes nicely, but then Hughes only marginally modifies his beat throughout the rest of the first movement, where Sibelius asks for many fluctuations and speed-ups. The cumulative development section not only lacks excitement but, at times, sounds almost like a cautious first read-through, while the full, but slightly confusing acoustic of St John's Smith Square suggests it may not be the easiest venue in which to record a full orchestra. These are honest, straightforward accounts, but there are many more vital, characteristic and insightful recordings in the catalogue. *Bayan Northcott*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★

Stravinsky

The Firebird; Petrushka; The Rite of Spring
London Symphony Orchestra/Simon Rattle
LSO Live LSO 5096 (CD/SACD)
116:30 mins (2 discs)

In the booket note, Simon Rattle tells us that performing these three great Stravinsky ballet scores in a single programme was an idea he put several decades ago to the then management of the Philharmonia, who turned it down flat. The idea endured; and these 2017 live recordings come from the opening concerts of Rattle's tenure as LSO music director.

The result is a remarkable feat by any standards. The orchestra responds to the challenge with a spectacular display of sustained firepower, rhythmic control and individual artistry. And there's much evidence, too, of Rattle's superlative ear for detail, bringing out exactly what the composer has written down: the atmospheric Introduction to Part 2 of *The Rite of Spring* comes across with mesmerising vividness. Some of the tempos (as in 'Dance of the Earth') feel perhaps a notch too quick for the music's full momentum to build, but in the context of the occasion's heady excitement, this is a small reservation. A slightly less small one concerns the wider sense, in the other two ballets, of something missing – as if these are performances, however impressively delivered, of abstract works rather than (also) masterpieces of musical storytelling. *The Firebird* needs to take you on a journey through its Russian fairytale world, just as *Petrushka* should leave you feeling that you've actually been to St Petersburg's Shrovetide Fair in the pre-revolutionary 'Old Russia' where Stravinsky grew up. Somehow neither adventure of the imagination quite happens here. *Malcolm Hayes*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Psappha Commissions

Works by John Casken, Tom Coult, Ninfea Cruttwell-Reade, Alissa Firsova, Tom Harrold, George Stevenson and Mark-Anthony Turnage
Psappha Ensemble
Psappha PSA1008 73:09 mins

Psappha's 30th birthday present to itself (see feature, p52) does exactly what it says on the tin. *Commissions* revisits half-a-dozen works written specially for the ensemble over the past 12 years, and in a multiplicity of styles, speaking to Psappha's versatility and to the broad church that is contemporary classical music. The oldest piece (2010) is John Casken's *Winter Reels*, an evocation of Northern landscapes underpinned by Casken's characteristic glitteringly incised translucence and gestural sure-footedness. Mark-Anthony Turnage's Holocaust-remembering *Black Milk* on the other hand at times seems to summon up the refracted spirit of Kurt Weill and was written with the distinctive timbres of jazz vocalist Ian Shaw in mind.

The rest of the programme falls to a younger generation. *Dark Dance*, Tom Harrold's 'perverse viola concertino' (his words), pits a feisty solo viola against an irrepressibly oxygenating, fidgety accompaniment, while Tom Coult's *Two Games and a Nocturne* has the exuberant playfulness of two 'games' counterbalanced by the redefined impressionism of the 'Nocturne'. Ninfea Cruttwell-Reade's *Patdeep Studies* drill down into Hindustani *rāg* in a carefully curated confluence of East-meets-West that embraces delicacy, determination and even a little humour. George Stevenson, meanwhile, inspired by the physicist Richard Feynman, interrogates notions of the familiar.

The performances – captured during concerts across 2021 – are top notch, the music inhabited and communicated with compelling understanding and captivating aplomb. A free bonus download seals a scintillating anniversary pat on the back. *Paul Riley*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Symphonies of the Bach Family

Works by CPE, JCF, JE, JL, JS and WF Bach
Berliner Barock Solisten/Reinhard Goebel
Hänssler Classic HC 21029 63:37 mins

Reinhard Goebel has never been one to shun the provocative. When his period-instrument ensemble Musica Antiqua Köln recorded Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos* back in the 1980s the finale of No. 3 set a new land speed record. Nowadays he's happy to assert that 'the fetish of the "original instrument" has had its day…it's not the instrument that makes the music but the head'. To a certain extent he has a point, of course. But where would the *St Matthew Passion* be without the pungent sounds of oboes d'amore and da caccia; or what can match the woody melancholy of the transverse flute or the viola da gamba in the music of the French Baroque? Since 2018 Goebel has been artistic director of the Berliner Barock Solisten who espouse modern instruments. Let the arguments rage!

His latest foray into the music of the Bach dynasty makes a beeline for the sinfonia and musters no fewer than four premiere recordings including two sinfonias by CPE Bach who, alas, is not at his idiosyncratic best; there's a symphony by Wilhelm Friedemann that springs a few aural ambushes but is otherwise fairly unremarkable; and, best of all, his father's reworking (BWV 1045) of a movement showcasing a virtuosic solo violin bouncing off two oboes, three trumpets and timps. Overall, despite Goebel's idiomatic fluency and fastidious attention to detail, a certain polished proficiency prevails, the playing elegant, incisive, but somewhat anonymous. There's no denying BWV 1045's high-gloss finish, but Isabelle Faust and the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin on Harmonia Mundi find an edgy exhilaration that takes the fragment to another level. *Paul Riley*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

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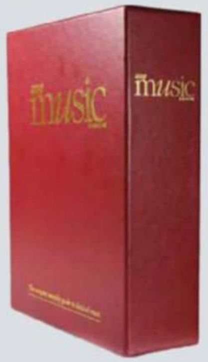

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CONCERTO CHOICE

Bavouzet digs deep to add fresh insights to Mozart

Claire Jackson enjoys the pianist's immersive approach to this survey of the composer's concertos

Musical subtexts: Jean-Efflam Bavouzet finds links between Mozart's concertos and operas

BENJAMIN EALOVEGA

Mozart

Piano Concertos Nos 22 & 23; Der Schauspieldirektor, K486 – Overture
Jean-Efflam Bavouzet (piano); Manchester Camerata/Gábor Takács-Nagy
Chandos CHAN 20166 64:34 mins

Few piano concertos are as well represented on disc as Mozart's, with benchmark recordings available from Martha Argerich and other great pianists. Some of these involve performance practises outside the 'norm' – Mitsuko Uchida (Decca) and Howard Shelley (Chandos) both conduct from the keyboard, for example, and Kristian Bezuidenhout's fortepiano versions (Harmonia Mundi) add unusual but authentic timbres to Mozart's music – but generally it could be argued that the repertoire is already well served. It is all the more remarkable, then, that Jean-Efflam Bavouzet continues to bring freshness and renewed enjoyment to these pieces with the latest volume in his complete concerto series.

Bavouzet's belief in total immersion of an oeuvre – he has previously recorded all of Haydn's sonatas, Debussy's piano works and Beethoven's sonatas and concertos for Chandos – enables him to examine the connective tissue within a body of work. Concerto No. 22 is of *The Magic Flute* era, a time when Mozart was influenced by the masonic lifestyle. The repeated-note motif in the first movement is sometimes attributed to door-knocking – a secret sign given by the masons. Bavouzet brings out the liquidity of the phrases rather than emphasising the percussive parts, a technique repeated in the final rondo.

> Gábor Takács-Nagy sets Manchester Camerata off at a sure-footed trot

The popular No. 23 is given an aching *Adagio*, neatly offset by the cheerful finale. The overture to *Der Schauspieldirektor* was composed alongside *The Marriage of Figaro* and the rhythmic material is very similar. Gábor Takács-Nagy sets Manchester Camerata off at a sure-footed, pacy trot. Chetham's Stoller Hall reveals its reliably excellent acoustics.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

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Babadjanian • Rachmaninov

Rachmaninov: Piano Concerto No. 2; **Babadjanian**: Heroic Ballad
Jean-Paul Gasparian (piano); Berner Sinfonieorchester/Stefan Blunier
Claves CD 3004 55:11 mins

The young French-Armenian pianist Jean-Paul Gasparian has already recorded substantial works by Rachmaninov, including the Second Piano Sonata, to much acclaim. It seems entirely appropriate, then, that he should record a work by that composer to open his debut concerto disc. But whether it was wise of him to choose the well-known Second Concerto for this purpose is another matter.

Gasparian has the measure of its technical challenges, delivering brilliant clarity in the capricious middle section of the slow movement and in the intricate passages in the Finale. But the performance as a whole is let down by his unduly strident tone in some of the more full-blooded sections, though I wonder whether this problem may well have been exacerbated by the closely miked recording of the piano in relation to the orchestra.

Still, this release is worth hearing for the first modern recording of the *Heroic Ballad* by Armenian composer, Arno Babadjanian. Composed in 1950 and awarded a Stalin Prize the following year, this accessible and skilfully conceived work, reflecting the dual influences of Rachmaninov and Khachaturian, was championed by no less a pianist than Emil Gilels and here receives a superbly vibrant performance from Gasparian. *Erik Levi*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★

Beethoven

Piano Concertos Nos 1 & 3
Kristian Bezuidenhout (fortepiano); Freiburger Barockorchester/Pablo Heras-Casado
Harmonia Mundi HMM 902412 67:15 mins

Throughout his career, Beethoven enjoyed a complex dance with the piano manufacturers of his day. Their symbiotic relationship resulted in both compositions and

instruments being expanded far beyond the technical limitations of the past. In this recording Kristian Bezuidenhout's sensitive and nuanced playing on a modern copy of an 1824 Graf fortepiano taps into the extended reaches of Beethoven's imagination. The cadenzas have improvisatory flair aplenty – including some genuine improvisation, notably in the finale of No. 3; the whispered, inward opening of that work's slow movement is also deeply touching.

The Freiburg Baroque Orchestra, however, accompanies the C minor Concerto with emotionally glacial, thuddy-drummed, razor-edged sounds, which appear all the more shallow and unsubtle when heard in contrast to the soloist's free-flowing and poetically expressive artistry. No. 1 in C major comes off better: there's a sense that the orchestra and its soloist are conceptually more at one – and occasional moments bring delight as Bezuidenhout joins in the orchestral tutti, especially in the first movement.

While the recorded sound manages to allow the fortepiano's bright tone to stand out in a satisfactory way, the hectoring quality notable in some of the orchestral playing is not soothed by an over-resonant acoustic, which somewhat scuppers the potential for lightness and clarity. *Jessica Duchen*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★

Flair and sensitivity: Kristian Bezuidenhout is nuanced in Beethoven

MARCO BORGGREVE

Chopin

Piano Concertos Nos 1 & 2 (arr. for piano and string quintet)
Emmanuel Despax (piano); Chineke! Chamber Ensemble
Signum Classics SIGCD 700 75:09 mins

New versions of Chopin's two concertos are still being added to the catalogue. Even the chamber versions – right from the start, these works were performed in intimate settings – are now being recorded more frequently, so these performances by Emmanuel Despax and the Chineke! Chamber Ensemble come up against stiff competition, falling a little short not for the brilliance of the pianism but as chamber music per se. In the long opening of Concerto No. 1 in E minor, the string quintet is not ideally blended (and perhaps too closely recorded); that might imply a certain domestic authenticity about the music-making were it not for the feeling that these performers sound less like chamber musicians than one-to-a-part orchestral players.

Despax is an arresting soloist, well worth hearing – but he sounds as if he's projecting into a big concert hall rather than a chamber partner. From his grand entry in the E minor work, he brings virtuosic authority and a good sense of Chopin's style, leading the performers so that the all-important rubato (in the F minor Second Concerto's first movement especially) seems natural. Despax shines in the bel canto flourishes of the F minor's slow movement, but the magic of this work's finale is compromised when the violins and viola sound clunkily exposed in the col legno passages. It's in those few moments without piano that the shortcomings show up. *John Allison*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★

Leclair

Violin Concertos, Opp. 7 & 10
Leila Schayegh (violin); La Cetra Barockorchester Basel
Glossa GCD 924206 61:24 mins

This volume completes Leila Schayegh's survey of Leclair's violin concertos. An eloquent advocate for this richly rewarding music, Schayegh effortlessly captures its extrovert virtuosity without any exaggerated or vacuous gesture, and unfailingly conveys the many passages of sensuous allure with intimate and unaffected tenderness.

Few if any expressive details are overlooked, but it is in the native, often dance-related *beau chant* that Schayegh excels. The *Andante gratioso* Aria of the Concerto, Op. 10 No. 4 is a fine example, as she affectingly discovers its underlying melancholy. There are flashier versions around, but Schayegh's understanding of the music and the sensitive partnership of La Cetra Barockorchester Basel, whose contribution I enjoyed more in this volume than in the first of the three, are endearing qualities. Readers, whether familiar or unfamiliar with the pieces, have a treat in store in these performances. *Nicholas Anderson*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Mozart

Piano Concertos Nos 23 & 24; Piano Quartet No. 2; Piano Trio No. 3; Rondo in D, K485; Ch'io mi scordi di te?, K505
Christiane Karg (soprano); Mahler Chamber Orchestra/ Leif Ove Andsnes (piano)
Sony 19439854512 117:31 mins (2 discs)

The idea is excellent – a programme of works completed by Mozart within a single year. Leif Ove Andsnes has already recorded an earlier selection from 1785, titled *Mozart Momentum 1785*; and given that the first few months of the next year – celebrated in this album headlined *Mozart Momentum 1786* – were largely taken up with the creation of an operatic masterwork in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Mozart's rate and quality of production for the rest of 1786 seems all the more amazing. This sheer range of achievement presents a demanding challenge to any artist trying to do full justice to all of it.

Andsnes's interpretations have a no-nonsense consistency that admirably avoids tendentious point-making; and there's an attractive feeling of ego-free comradeship with his fellow artists in the concerto and chamber performances alike, as also in Christiane Karg's beautifully sung 'Ch'io mi scordi di te?'

What doesn't get conveyed so readily is the sense of near-supernatural creative freedom that makes Mozart's music so special. This quality is unmistakable when it's there. Andsnes's playing of the D major Rondo sparkles as required; the B flat Piano Trio is graced with scintillating contributions from all three of its performers; and the tumultuous sweep of Piano Concerto No. 24 in C minor is delivered with power and verve. But the feeling doesn't quite come across that the E flat Piano Quartet, for instance, is also one of Mozart's most fabulously inventive masterworks. And the on-off emphasis on non vibrato period-style string tone doesn't intersect convincingly enough with the sound of Andsnes's choice of modern concert grand. *Malcolm Hayes*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Rautavaara

Lost Landscapes; Fantasia; In the Beginning; Serenades (arr. Kalevi Aho)
Simone Lamsma (violin); Malmö Symphony Orchestra/Robert Trevino
Ondine ODE 1405-2 56:36 mins

Selected by Sibelius for a Tanglewood scholarship in 1955, the experience proved inspirational for Einojuhani Rautavaara (1928-2016). What he called 'years of pilgrimage' in America and Europe ensued, furnishing the young Finn with a wide idiomatic range that would later coalesce into the rich neo-Romanticism for which he became widely celebrated.

The pieces here date from the very end of Rautavaara's life by which time, having survived near-fatal illness in 2004, he had become increasingly nostalgic for that formative period and more. Hence *Lost Landscapes* – recorded for the first time in its 2015 version with orchestra – rightly lends its title to an album in which vivid emotional colours hold sway.

All except one are concertante works for solo violin, tautly and sweetly performed by soloist Simone Lamsma with fine support from the Malmö Symphony Orchestra under conductor Robert Trevino. *Lost Landscapes* itself is the most conventionally concerto-like, its four contrasting movements recalling student locations – of which Switzerland's No. II 'Ascona' produces the most satisfyingly dissonance-peppered bite.

There's little real tension in Rautavaara's soundworld, yet momentum never dips in the constant interplay of surging, often asymmetric melodies and lush, sweeping textures. The one-movement *Fantasia* (2015) is just that: uncomplicated and beautifully cohesive in form and expression – while the touching two *Serenades* (2016/18) are brought to us courtesy of Kalevi Aho's sensitive completion post-mortem. Perhaps most poignant of all, the short, orchestral *In the Beginning* (2015) was paradoxically the last piece Rautavaara finished before his death. *Steph Power*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Vivaldi

Flautino Concerto in C, RV443; Trio Concertos, RV 101, 103 & 107; Flute Concertos, RV439 'La notte' & RV428 'Il gardellino'
Michael Oman (recorder), Paolo Grazzi (oboe), Alberto Grazzi (bassoon), Amandine Beyer (violin); Austrian Baroque Company
Fra Bernardo FB 2271745 50:15 mins

As a teacher at the girls' orphanage of the Pietà in Venice, Vivaldi had access to the institution's rich collection of musical instruments, which his pupils clearly mastered with aplomb. This recording conjures up the resonant and airy spaces of the Pietà's church with a handful of concertos showcasing the various instruments at his disposal.

The chamber concertos are delightful musical conversations in which recorder player Michael Oman dialogues and banters with some of the most charismatic Baroque soloists on the scene today: violinist Amandine Beyer and brothers Paolo and Alberto Grazzi on oboe and bassoon. By contrast, the solo concertos were designed to show off individual players: here – wielding a battery of recorders – Oman dazzles with jaw-dropping virtuosity. What lifts these performances from mere musical fireworks, though, is Oman's ability to change the recorder's persona: in 'La notte', it dreams and whispers up ghostly sounds; in 'Il gardellino', it trills and chirrups like a goldfinch (or *gardellino*), and in the C major Concerto RV443, it sings virtuoso arias and lamenting melodies like an operatic diva. Add to this gutsy and dramatic playing by the Austrian Baroque Company, who clearly relish Vivaldi's brilliant instrumental writing, and you have a winning combination. *Kate Bolton-Porciatti*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

BACKGROUND TO...
Babadjanian's *Heroic Ballad for Piano & Orchestra*

Though the darling of the Moscow music scene and bestowed with the USSR's highest honours – including the Order of Lenin – Arno Babadjanian would never be separated from Armenia. His deep love for his homeland is at the heart of many of his works, including this monumental piece for piano and orchestra. Composed and published in 1950 during a stay in Yerevan, the work features unpredictable rhythms and is imbued with Babadjanian's personality. The piece won the Stalin Prize in 1951.

The Mandolin Seasons

Piazzolla: The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires;
Vivaldi: The Four Seasons
Jacob Reuven (mandolin); Sinfonietta Leipzig/Omer Meir Wellber (accordion)
Hyperion CDA68357 66:33 mins

Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* shimmer through the Venetian mists in Jacob Reuven's reinterpretation on the mandolin, interspersed with a rich, riveting take on Piazzolla's *Four Seasons of Buenos Aires*, inspired by the violin arrangement of Leonid Desyatnikov.

With Reuven's longtime friend, conductor Omer Meir Wellber, the whole album fizzes with energy and spontaneity. The familiar sounds of Vivaldi's *Seasons* are rewired with the plucked aesthetic of Reuven's wildly virtuosic mandolin, the Piazzolla mixed up with quasi-dissonant echoes of Vivaldi, the seasons of each composer interlaced. The Sinfonietta Leipzig (musicians from the Gewandhausorchester) bring spontaneity alongside fastidious clarity and musicianship, underscored by Wellber's brilliantly improvised accordion/harpsichord continuo.

Everywhere is displacement, the Piazzolla fuelled by the grit of the dance, its 'Winter' achingly heartfelt, Reuven's mandolin poised, evocative, as Wellber's accordion grasps the Argentinian heart. If there are jolts along the way in the Vivaldi, the Venetian's work also metamorphoses willingly in places, perhaps most starkly in 'Winter', as Wellber's ever-emotive accordion takes on the *Allegro*'s familiar opening lines, transferring a folkish authenticity, as if played by a fisherman on the banks of the lagoon. Elsewhere, moments of transformation, such as in Spring's *Largo*, as the accordion quietly shares the solo line with the expressive mandolin, or the *Adagio Molto* of Autumn. This is Vivaldi half-heard through an early morning mist in a Venice back-street, theatrical, ghostly, out of time, snatched notes from history as if played by a troupe of players from the more distant shores of the floating city's old empire. *Sarah Urwin Jones*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Thomascantors in Dialogue

Works by JS Bach, Fasch, Graupner and Telemann
Thomas Triesschijn (recorder); The Counterpoints XL
Challenge Classics CC72903 68:34 mins

This release is an oddity. At face value it looks like a straightforward programme of music for recorder and ensemble, but some of it has been subjected to what strikes my ears as intrusive meddling. Telemann's Ouverture in A minor for treble recorder and strings is one of his best-known works in suite form; but, for reasons not explained, percussion instruments and, notably a stentorian sounding drum have been introduced. Why? It adds no illuminating dimension to Telemann's lucid textures and seems wholly out of place.

The remaining pieces fare better. Thomas Triesschijn is a fluent virtuoso and his arrangement of three instrumental movements from two of Bach's cantatas to form a concerto comes over well. The concertos by Graupner and Johann Friedrich Fasch are genuine recorder works and are stylishly played. Neither work is new to the recording catalogue but as companion pieces they offer interesting comparison.

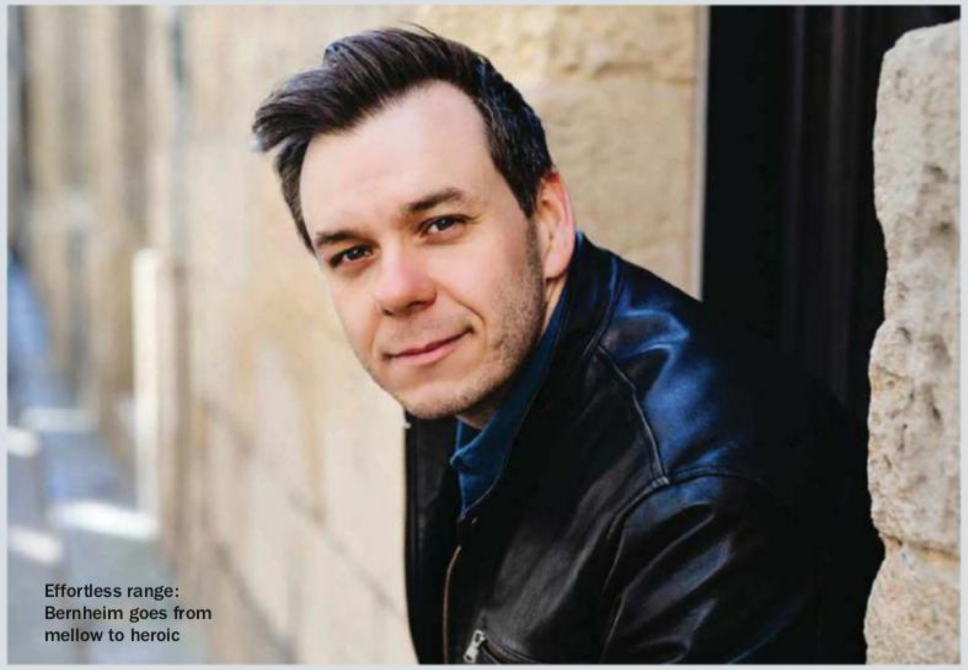
The disc's title derives from the fact that all four composers competed or, at least, were invited to apply for the Leipzig post that had been vacated by the death of Johann Kuhnau in 1722. The greater part of the accompanying booklet contains an imaginary exchange between the musicians while waiting for their audition. If I tell you that there is a pot plant in one corner of the artificially lighted room, a gurgling water cooler in another and that JS Bach discloses to the assembled company that he always keeps a Siciliano up his sleeve, you will get the drift. *Nicholas Anderson*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

OPERA CHOICE

A beguiling walk down the Boulevard des Italiens

Tenor Benjamin Bernheim serves up an album of rare operatic delights, says ***Alexandra Wilson***


Effortless range: Bernheim goes from mellow to heroic

Boulevard des Italiens

Arias from Cherubini: Ali Baba; **Donizetti:** La fille du régiment; La favorite; Dom Sébastien, Roi de Portugal; **Mascagni:** Amica; **Puccini:** Madam Butterfly; Tosca; **Spontini:** La vestale; **Verdi:** Don Carlos; Jérusalem; Les vêpres siciliennes

Benjamin Bernheim (tenor); Orchestra del Teatro Comunale di Bologna/Frédéric Chaslin

DG 486 1964 55:53 mins

If you were to walk in Paris from the Opéra to the Opéra Comique, the quickest route would be to take the Boulevard des Italiens – following in the footsteps of numerous Italian composers who were fêted during the French capital's operatic heyday. On this disc Benjamin Bernheim sings a selection of their arias as Parisian audiences would originally have heard them – in French.

It's hard to imagine an international record label releasing a disc of arias as performed in English at Sadler's Wells, but this isn't only about opera in translation. Italian composers often adapted their works for Parisian audiences, or composed them specially. Included in the programme are gorgeous, rarely heard Verdi arias, dusted off and brought back to life.

The change of language is in some cases revelatory: familiar Puccini arias sound beguilingly mellow. Bernheim, who has a voice of immense clarity and lyrical attractiveness, sings Puccini like a dream. But there are also rarer delights aplenty here: elegant poise in Donizetti's *La favorite*, heroic dynamism in Spontini's *La vestale*, and a top-C-packed number from Cherubini's *Ali Baba* (who knew?), an ideal vehicle for Bernheim's effortlessly expansive upper range. Taking a stroll with him down the Boulevard des Italiens is a real treat.

> Benjamin Bernheim has a voice of immense clarity and lyrical attractiveness

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

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Mozart

Lucio Silla

Franco Fagioli, Olga Pudova, Chiara Skerath, Alessandro Liberatore, Ilse Eerens; Le Jeune Chœur de Paris; Insula Orchestra/Laurence Equilbey

Erato 9029637734

126:33 mins (2 discs)

Mozart's *Lucio Silla* was the last of three operas he composed for Milan's Teatro Regio Ducal – forerunner of La Scala – in 1772, when he was not quite 17 years old. Following its highly successful initial run, it was heard no more until the 20th century. While this *dramma per musica* about a cruel Roman dictator who eventually gives up power doesn't bear comparison with his mature scores, in a strong performance it is well worth encountering.

This live recording has its origins in a European tour undertaken by Laurence Equilbey and her orchestra back in 2016. More recently, having set up her Festival Maximum Mozart, she revived the piece with the same cast as in its previous emanation.

In her own liner note, the conductor notes that Nikolaus Harnoncourt – whose 1998 recording (also live) was previously the only one to employ period instruments – made cuts, removing the minor role of Aufidio and some recitative. She goes a good deal further. Her claim that what remains sustains the narrative is pretty optimistic: on a recording, one should surely aim for the entire score. In any case her cast is not nearly so impressive as Harnoncourt's: Peter Schreier, Edita Gruberová, Cecilia Bartoli, Dawn Upshaw and Yvonne Kenny sang for him.

There are certainly strengths in Equilbey's team – especially in Chiara Skerath's lucid Cinna and Alessandro Liberatore's trenchant Silla. The other members of the cast are less consistent, with coloratura passages not always cleanly negotiated and tone sometimes unsteady. The chorus, though, is impressive, the orchestra spry and the conductor brings dynamism to her task. *George Hall*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Mozart

Don Giovanni (DVD)

Erwin Schrott, Roberto Tagliavini, Malin Byström, Myrtò Papatanasiu, Daniel Behle, Louise Alder, Petros Magoulas, Leon Košavić; Royal Opera Chorus and Orchestra/Hartmut Haenchen; dir. Kasper Holten (London, 2014)

Opus Arte DVD: OA1344D;
Blu-ray: OABD7295D 178 mins

Well did you ever? The booklet that accompanies this DVD of Kasper Holten's Royal Opera House production of *Don Giovanni* credits Emanuel Schikaneder, the impresario for whom Mozart wrote *The Magic Flute*, as the author of the libretto! Moving swiftly on, this is really the video designer Luke Hall's production quite as much as Holten's, staged in a vast revolving mansion, with many rooms and doors, constantly digitally graffitied; most effectively during Leporello's catalogue aria when the walls are covered with women's names.

The production mixes and matches the Prague and Vienna versions of the opera in an uncritical way, with Holten's Giovanni not dragged off to hell and the moral edge of the final ensemble blunted as the survivors pronounce judgement off stage.

Holten's Don is a fine fellow out for a good time, with Erwin Schrott every inch stripped to the waistbelt and ready to give the girls what 'they desire'. So no hint of rape, or violent seduction, no agonising ennui and no rebellion against stifling social mores. Indeed, it's hard to know why or where and when the drama unfolds with the cast fashionably dressed across several historical periods. If Malin Byström struggles with Donna Anna, Myrtò Papatanasiu's Donna Elvira tugs at the heart, although Hartmut Haenchen's measured tempos in 'Mi tradì' scarcely seem to her taste. Louise Alder is a bouncy Zerlina and her Masetto, Leon Košavić, suitably sulky. Poor Don Ottavio: two of the most tender arias in the opera, but will Daniel Behle ever get his girl when Holten's Donna Anna only has hands for Giovanni? *Christopher Cook*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
PICTURE & SOUND ★★★★

Prokofiev

The Fiery Angel (DVD)

Aušrinė Stundytė, Bo Skovhus, Natascha Petrinsky, Elena Zaremba, Nikolai Schukoff; Arnold Schoenberg Choir; ORF Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra/Constantin Trinks; dir. Andrea Breth (Vienna, 2021)

Unitel DVD: 805908;
Blu-ray: 806004 124 mins

Ruprecht, a wandering knight (originally in 16th-century Germany), gets involved with Renata, a troubled young woman possibly possessed by demons. Mostly composed in the 1920s but never completed to his own satisfaction, Prokofiev's opera is based on a symbolist novel (by fellow Russian Valery Bryusov) – so its symbolic treatment here is perhaps appropriate.

The entire action is relocated to what the booklet note calls a 'a modern psychiatric ward' – a nightmarish institution equipped with the most basic hospital equipment, iron bedsteads and manual typewriters. Far from complementing Prokofiev's colourful score (well realised by the ORF Radio Symphony Orchestra under Constantin Trinks), the design is all greys, off-whites and black.

Both main characters are inmates, which instantly gives a strong slant to everything they say and believe. Ruprecht is no longer an ordinary if worldly adventurer swept up by Renata's allure and predicament: Bo Skovhus does his best, but inevitably gives something of a one-note performance, looking bewildered and a touch unhinged throughout. He and Aušrinė Stundytė (Renata) are gifted just one insightful scene: when Renata demands that Ruprecht kills her Angel, then has an apparent change of heart, she is not just being capricious but is evidently suffering that awful emotional ambivalence anyone who has been through a traumatic breakup will recognise. Too often, though, the production rides roughshod over the story, not least in conflating characters for no better reason than they share a voice type: for instance, Agrippa and Mephistopheles in this production are presented as the same character – here, a disingenuous, sadistic doctor (sung with relish by Nikolai Schukoff). How that enhances the drama is anyone's guess. *Daniel Jaffé*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
PICTURE & SOUND ★★★★

Feeling *Blue*: Kenneth Kellogg is an eloquent leading man

Jeanine Tesori

Blue

Kenneth Kellogg, Briana Hunter, Aaron Crouch, Gordon Hawkins; Washington National Opera Orchestra/Roderick Cox

Pentatone PTC 5186 967 (CD/SACD)

121:45 mins (2 discs)

Blue was premiered in Washington DC in 2019 – a year before George Floyd's murder spotlit the ongoing scourge of police brutality towards young Black men across America. The timing lends an appalling prescience to the story of this opera, and its outrage that Black communities 'have been here before'.

A young Black couple against the odds raise a teenage Son until their worst nightmare is realised at his fatal shooting by a police officer. The twist is that the Father is himself a cop, running the daily gauntlet of life as a Black man who dares to don the 'blue'. Shaped as a series of dialogues, Tazewell Thompson's libretto is eviscerating in its fury and grief, and the agonising conflicts experienced by people torn apart by racist violence. Yet it's equally, painfully full of tenderness, love and humour. The contrasts are beautifully matched in Jeanine Tesori's score, which moves from lush warmth to splintered dissonance in a heartbeat, straddling art and vernacular styles with subtlety and verve.

The cast's performances are both moving and cogent in their refusal to accept the toxicity thrust upon them. Kenneth Kellogg, Briana Hunter and Aaron Crouch are eloquent as Father, Mother and Son, a trinity supported by three Girlfriends and three Policemen who morph into a church congregation led by Gordon Hawkins's dignified Reverend. Conductor Roderick Cox brings luminosity to a finely honed Washington National Opera Orchestra. *Steph Power*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Weber

Der Freischütz

Maximilian Schmitt, Polina Pasztircsák, Kateryna Kasper, Dimitry Ivashchenko; Zurich Sing-Akademie; Freiburger Barockorchester/René Jacobs

Harmonia Mundi HMM 902700.01

135:46 mins (2 discs)

No sharpshooter's shot signals the start of René Jacobs's *Der Freischütz*: rather, the all-wise Hermit is visited by Agathe and given white roses to protect her from

MANON LEPRÉVOST, VALENTINA SADIUL

evil, with Jacobs borrowing music from the overture's *Adagio* section for an opening scene that Weber himself discarded. Elsewhere Jacobs resurrects Kuno's rejected song about the history of the shooting trial, cunningly fitting it to a Schubert drinking song from the singspiel *Des Teufels Lustschloss*. Thus an opera that has seemed to embody ideas about German national identity after Napoleon, notably the importance of community, becomes a Christian struggle between the forces of good and evil. The 'Black Huntsman', Samiel, is ever present.

If it all convinces that's because Jacobs has an absolute instinct for Weber's score. The horns of the Freiburger Barockorchester are almost a character in their own right in this Romantic opera about huntsmen and the forest, and the woodwind – notably Weber's beloved clarinets – near perfect.

Not always so the singers. Maximilian Schmitt's Max is perhaps a little light of tone. His Agathe, Polina Pasztircsák, is guileless vocally, handling the climax at the end of 'Leise, Leise' thrillingly. However, Kateryna Kasper's Ännchen is more a woman of the world ready to advance a resonant lower register at the hint of a husband. Dimitry Ivashchenko's saturnine Kaspar has a real swagger to the voice. But it's the Zurich Sing-Akademie who take the laurels as boisterous huntsmen and gleeful villagers. *Christopher Cook*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Debut showcase: Rachel Willis Sørensen's winning vocal range is on display

SIMON PAULY

In Questa Reggia

Arias by Puccini and Verdi
Oksana Dyka (soprano); Kaunas City Symphony Orchestra/ Constantine Orbelian
Delos DE 3586 67:25 mins

Ukrainian soprano Oksana Dyka began her operatic career as a principal with the Kyiv Opera in the 2000s and can now regularly be heard at all the world's major opera houses, in New York, London, Milan, Munich, Paris and beyond. Though Dyka sometimes sings Russian and Czech repertoire, she is first and foremost an Italianist, and this is the music she showcases here, in a disc of well-known Puccini and Verdi arias.

Dyka is a redoubtable Turandot, the voice icy and penetrating, almost overwrought at the top, as fits the role well enough. However, the warmth and tenderness required for Butterfly are in short supply, and Manon Lescaut's desperate plea from the desert sounds matronly and emotionally detached. Dyka's Amelia (*Un ballo in maschera*) is more persuasive, with effective characterisation and expressive dark tones. And it is in the three numbers from *Macbeth* that she is most impressive: bold, dramatically intense, and vocally all guns blazing.

There is little that is novel here in terms of repertoire, but this disc will appeal to listeners keen to keep tabs on the latest big names in international opera, or to those whose curiosity about Ukrainian culture has been piqued by recent political events. *Alexandra Wilson*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★

Rachel Willis Sørensen

Arias and scenes by Dvořák, Lehár, Mozart, Puccini and Verdi
Rachel Willis Sørensen (soprano), Olivia Kahler (mezzo-soprano), Giovanni Sala, Jonas Kaufmann (tenor); Orchestra Della Fondazione Teatro Carlo Felice di Genova/ Frédéric Chaslin
Sony Classical 19439968352 74:11 mins

First achieving international attention with her three prizes in the 2014 Operalia Competition, the American soprano Rachel Willis Sørensen has waited until the age of 38 to release her debut solo disc. Hers is a full, fleshy soprano with a tone one might suggest has a slightly Nordic quality (her name implies a Scandinavian background). She possesses a good vocal range – less so, perhaps, in respect of colour; but she's musically secure and her vocalism is always clear and expertly controlled.

All the roles she samples are within her stage repertoire. She gets around all the notes in Violetta's big solo scene (*Traviata*) with confident fluency, including respectable trills wherever they're required. Bringing firmness and tireless determination to Donna Anna's two arias, she's equally expressive in the recitatives. In the 'Willow Song' and Ave Maria from *Otello*, she conveys Desdemona's melancholy and foreboding, her final desperate cry of farewell following the former finely judged. With her perfectly shaped line, her account of Rusalka's 'Song to the Moon' is deeply touching. Leonora in *Trovatore* is usually considered a role requiring more sheer weight, but once again she makes a success of it.

Of the extra singers involved, the most eminent is Jonas Kaufmann, who joins her in 'O soave fanciulla' (*La bohème*), both of them rising to a *pianissimo* top C. Mimì's aria is thought through, suggesting an intelligent, self-aware person. The accompaniments are well handled by the Italian orchestra under the French conductor. *George Hall*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Rivales

Airs and duets from JC Bach: La clemenza di Scipione; **Cherubini:** Démophoon; **Dalayrac:** Camille; **J-F Edelmann:** Ariane dans l'isle de Naxos; **Gluck:** La clemenza di Tito etc.; **Grétry:** L'embarras des richesses etc.; **Monsigny:** La belle Arsène; **Persuis:** Fanny Morna; **Sacchini:** Renaud
Sandrine Piau, Véronique Gens (soprano); Le Concert de la Loge/ Julien Chauvin
Alpha Classics ALPHA 824 63:12 mins

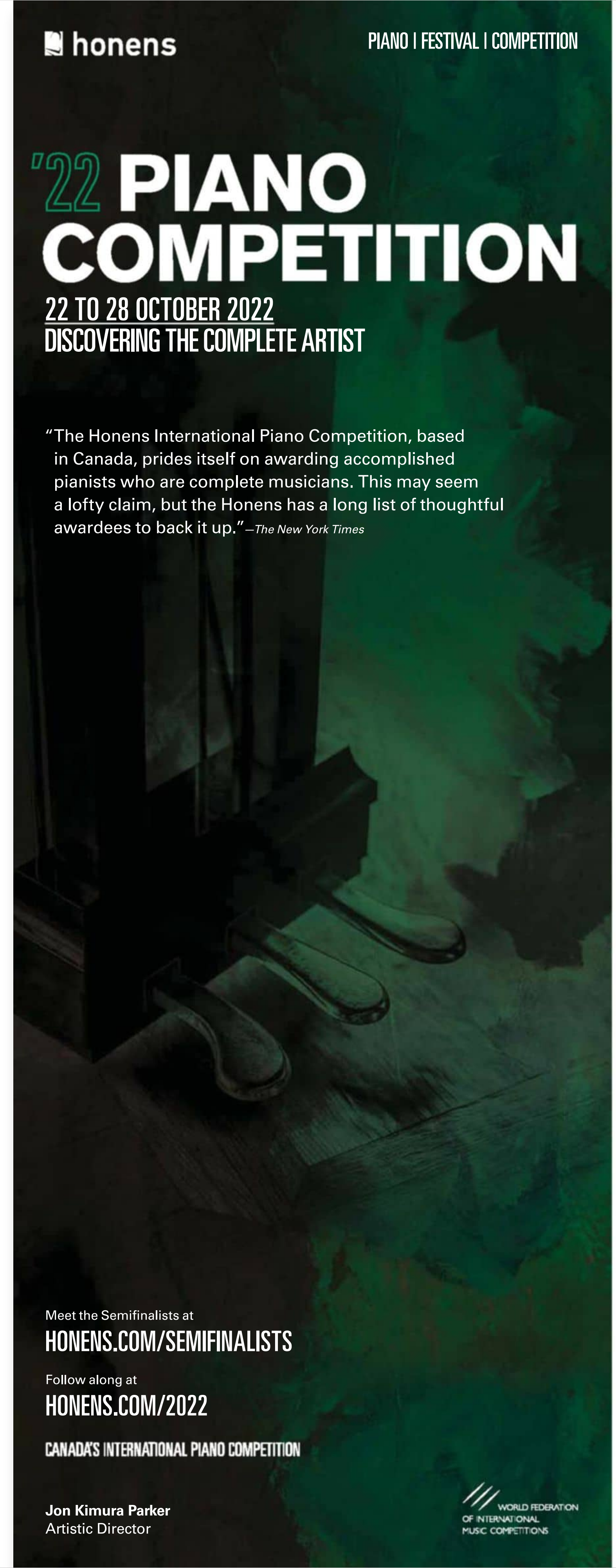
The title suggests two singers in direct competition. In fact the artists whose once glittering careers are celebrated on this disc – Madame Saint-Huberty (1756-1812) and Madame Dugazon (1755-1821) – essentially sang different kinds of roles in different repertoires at different theatres: the former was based at the Opéra, which specialised in the *tragédie-lyrique*, the latter at the Opéra-Comique, the home of lighter, mostly comic works; her name was later used to delineate two distinct vocal types she embodied at different times in her career.

Their careers and vocal characters are explored in the liner notes, but there's nothing on the composers of the 11 items on the disc, let alone any context for individual items other than the sung texts. If you want to understand Pauline's situation in Louis-Luc Loiseau de Persuis's *Fanny Morna* (1799), you will need to look elsewhere. This is a problem, given that with the exception of 'Divinités du Styx' in Gluck's *Alceste*, all of the items here are extremely obscure.

There are some highly dramatic pieces as befitting Saint-Huberty, some sentimental or lively ones associated with Dugazon, and a couple of duets among the arias. A good deal of the music is interesting.

Performances by two modern French singers of an almost identical age (in their mid-fifties) are perfectly decent but under-characterised, as if they had little more understanding of the dramatic contexts than the prospective purchaser. As a taster, it's tantalising, but on another level – and despite some exciting orchestral playing and vital conducting – it's frustrating. *George Hall*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★★



Choral & Song

CHORAL & SONG CHOICE

A celestial tapestry uniting old and new

This selection from ORA Singers is a tour de force, says *Kate Bolton-Porciatti*

Stella – *Renaissance Gems and their Reflections, Vol. 3*

Works by Victoria, Francisco Coll, Cecilia McDowall, Will Todd et al
ORA Singers/Suzi Digby
Harmonia Mundi HMM905341 71:56 mins

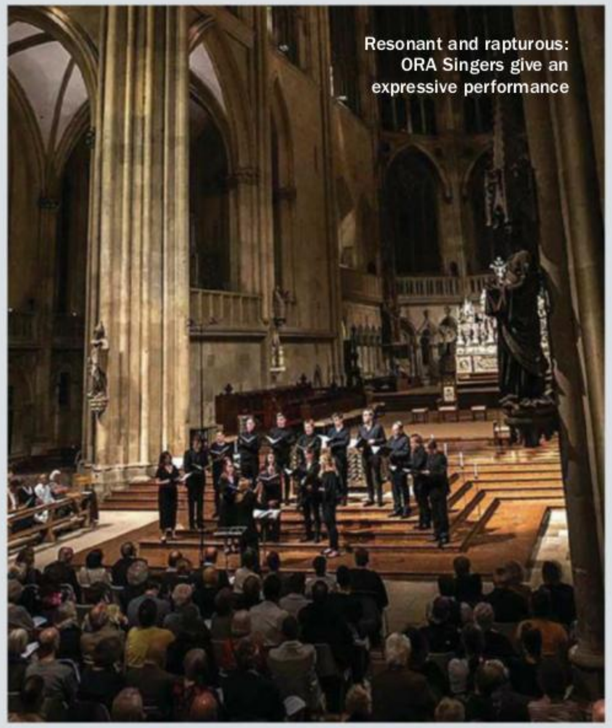
This skilfully crafted sequence takes a clutch of Marian works by the Spanish Renaissance composer Tomás Luis de Victoria and interlaces them with contemporary pieces – including four new commissions – inspired by the same texts. Some of the pairings are natural bedfellows: Victoria's perfumed setting of the *Song of Songs* text *Vidi speciosam*, for instance, sits harmoniously alongside an equally ecstatic response to the same words by the English composer Will Todd. There are more disturbing juxtapositions: the luminous serenity of Victoria's *Ave Maria Stella* is cut short with a turbulent new work by his compatriot, Francisco Coll, whose *Stella* (specially commissioned) is a stark but hauntingly beautiful exploration of vocal extremes, dissonances and spectral sounds. From it, Victoria's *Alma Redemptoris Mater* emerges like a vision of light in the dark, and in turn gives way to Cecilia McDowall's setting of the same text, which weaves florid vocal garlands into a Gothic-style motet.

> Francisco Coll's *Stella* is stark but hauntingly beautiful

Other highlights are Mark Simpson's *Ave Maria*, with its oscillating moods of joy and foreboding; Alexander Campkin's *Ave Maria caelorum*, whose stratospheric cascades of sound hypnotise, and Julian Wachner's *Regina coeli*, threaded with memories of Victoria's setting of the same text. This tour de force contrasts registers, dynamics, timbres and textures in a celestial vocal tapestry.

Suzi Digby coaxes highly expressive performances from the ORA Singers. Despite the wide ranges in dynamics, tessiture and repertoire, the voices are never forced and their pristine, resonant sound is rapturous.

PERFOMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



Resonant and rapturous: ORA Singers give an expressive performance

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Franck

Complete Songs & Duets
Véronique Gens (soprano), Tassis Christoyannis (baritone), Jeff Cohen (piano)
BruZane BZ2003 104:26 mins (2 discs)

The Palazetto Bru Zane has put its usual energy and sense of purpose into recording all Franck's 22 songs and six duets to celebrate the bicentenary of his birth this coming December. The 90-page booklet is a mine of information about the composer and his vocal works, asking us to think again about such topics as Franck's word setting, at which commentators have often looked askance. The test of the pudding, however, is in the listening. Tassis Christoyannis has a seductive *pianissimo*, but at the other extreme his tone takes on an edge that soon becomes wearing (he spends much of his time in opera houses, where this feature is probably more tolerable). I would also have liked more variety of colour to help us appreciate the sentiments of the poems. While Véronique Gens in the duets is her usual mellifluous self, and Jeff Cohen a capable accompanist, the piano's bass octaves suggest that the instrument has seen better days.

But above all, the problem as I hear it is that Franck was simply not a born composer of *mélodies*. After a fairly intensive engagement with these songs, I came away with not a single tune or even memorable moment. Certainly there is nothing here to match the songs of two of his pupils: none of the elfin sparkle of Chausson's *Les Papillons*, nor of the majestic dreamworld of Duparc's *La Vie antérieure*. *Roger Nichols*

PERFORMANCE ★★
RECORDING ★★★

Handel

Saul (DVD)
Florian Boesch, Jake Arditti, Anna Prohaska, Giulia Semenzato; Arnold Schoenberg Choir; Freiburg Baroque Orchestra/Christopher Moulds; dir. Claus Guth (Vienna, 2021)
Unitel DVD: 805508; Blu-ray: 805604 158 mins

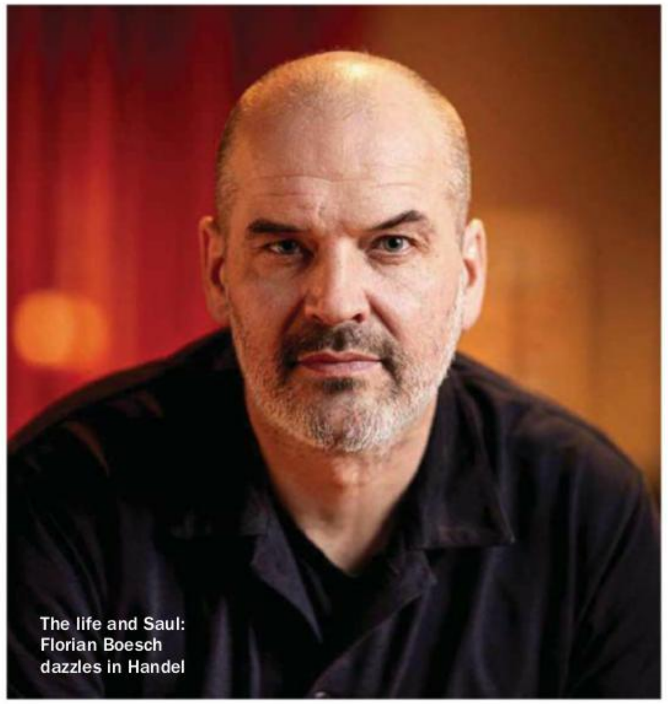
In April 2021, a revival of Claus Guth's 2018 staging of Handel's oratorio *Saul*, with mostly the original cast, opened to a pandemic-emptied Theater an der Wien. Among the few witnesses was video director Tiziano Mancini, who delivers a bold rendition of Guth's vision of *Saul*.

Saul, King of Israel (bass-baritone Florian Boesch) descends into mad jealousy of the Goliath-slaying David (countertenor Jake Arditti), after giving David his younger daughter in marriage. Saul tries, and fails, to kill David or have him killed. Mancini's energetic, evocative camera work makes the black walls, abattoir-like interiors, and revolving stage of Guth's minimalist set a character in the action. During the overture, Mancini inserts an eloquent silent film of a haggard Boesch foreseeing bloody visions of himself. During the action, Mancini's staccato cuts and claustrophobic close-ups, especially of chorus members – whose choreography pays homage to Peter Sellars's 1996 *Theodora* – implicate the viewer in Saul's breakdown.

So, too, does the blistering intensity of Boesch's Saul. Whether lashing out in *fortissimo* melismas or whispering in pure-tone *pianissimo*, Boesch probes totalising extremes. Other principals match Boesch's top quality, particularly Arditti, whose climaxes command a lithe, powerful core, but whose central aria, 'Oh Lord, whose mercies numberless', is arrestingly still.

Guth sometimes works against both the libretto and the music. Why have Saul's elder daughter Merab, who rejects David for his low rank, then desire him? Why do David and his beloved fiancée join with Jonathan and Merab in four-way sex? At such points Guth, Saul-like, forsakes common sense. Mancini's efforts, by contrast, help restore *Saul*'s dramatic coherence. *Berta Joncus*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
PICTURE & SOUND ★★★★



The life and Saul: Florian Boesch dazzles in Handel

HANNO MEIER

Jake Heggie – *Glass Ceilings*

Eve Song; Songs and Sonnets to Ophelia; Camille Claudel – Into the Fire
Melissa Davis (soprano), Jerry Wong (piano)
MSR Classics MS1783 71:36 mins

This collection of song cycles by Jake Heggie is perplexing in its conceit. Titled *Glass Ceilings*, the album pledges to 'give voice' to 'powerful women', yet all but three of the included songs set texts by male writers, meaning the promised 'female perspectives' feel oddly marginalised.

Most powerful of the three works is *Songs and Sonnets to Ophelia* (1999) which depicts the story of Ophelia through the words of Edna St Vincent Millay. Heggie's shimmering score traces Ophelia's downfall with a keen sense of drama, and while Davis's voice can feel thin in places she delivers a committed and characterful performance.

The other two works are more problematic. *Camille Claudel – Into the Fire* (2012) explores the experiences of French sculptor Camille Claudel who grew famous as Rodin's lover and muse, while her own work remained unjustly neglected. Davis handles the work's quasi-operatic episodes with verve but the cycle's text displays a troubling preoccupation with Claudel's relationship with Rodin and explores little else of her life or work. *Eve Song* (2000) is another such conundrum; while Heggie's colourful score is enjoyable enough, the text feels surprisingly crass in places ('Do you want to be like God? / How do you mean? / Be old and have a penis? / I don't think so. No.').

Heggie's music is often warmly appealing and the performances are not without merit, but it is hard to look beyond this contradiction between the disc's stated aims and its actual contents. On the strength of this album, the glass ceiling seems firmly in place. *Kate Wakeling*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★

Fanny & Felix Mendelssohn

Fanny Mendelssohn: Lobgesang; Hero und Leander; Lieder etc.; **Felix Mendelssohn:** Infelice; Hebrides Overture etc.
Chen Reiss (soprano), Arabella Steinbacher (violin); Jewish Chamber Orchestra Munich/Daniel Grossmann
Onyx Classics ONYX4231 65:07 mins

Even with today's upswing in the fortunes of Fanny Hensel née Mendelssohn, the recording industry still seems reluctant to prise her music away from that of her more famous brother, Felix. This recording from the Israeli soprano Chen Reiss is obviously no exception. That said, it is mostly a delectable selection, opening with the little-known Felix concert aria *Infelice*, written for the legendary Maria Malibran and involving an inspiring violin obbligato played beautifully and idiomatically here by Arabella Steinbacher.

Fanny is represented with some of her most beautiful songs, works which prove, if you still need proof, that her neglect until now has been phenomenally unjust; I'd defy anyone to hear 'Die Mainacht' without asking where it has been all our lives. Although her dramatic scena *Hero and Leander* is touted as the big discovery, its language is more conventional and less vividly individual than the more intimate Lieder – some originally issued under Felix's name – which take all the biscuits.

Reiss has a bright, warm and open tone which enhances both composers with sincerity and spontaneity. While one might wish for slightly greater variety to the vibrato and characterisation from time to time, she's a charismatic performer and consistently rewarding to listen to. The orchestrations by Tal-Haim Samnon are reasonably satisfying, though do occasionally veer towards the sugary; it is not clear why these Lieder were thought to need orchestrating at all.

Conductor Daniel Grossmann's tempos are often on the slow side, and the one real downer is the 'Rome' version of Felix's *Hebrides Overture* which is questionably sluggish and could have been harmlessly omitted. The recorded sound is a little bit bathroomy. *Jessica Duchen*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★

Schubert

An den Mond; Im Frühling; Seligkeit; Litanei auf das Fest Allerseelen; Der Zwerg; Im Abendrot; An Sylvia etc
Alice Coote (mezzo-soprano), Julius Drake (piano)
Hyperion CDA68169 67:24 mins

This recital collects 21 of Schubert's best-loved songs in an attractive bouquet of moods. Seasoned artists Alice Coote and Julius Drake give a frequently moving account of this familiar repertoire.

There is much to enjoy here. 'Im Frühling' is elastic and tender. The terrifying ballads 'Der Zwerg' and 'Erlkönig' lack a little story telling suspense; the musicians seem to reveal the brutal outcome from the start, although there are flashes of chilling violence. 'Ständchen', the hit number from *Schwanengesang*, is on the slow side, albeit delivered with a gloriously velvety legato. 'Seligkeit' feels a little laden, and 'Auf dem Wasser zu singen' could be more limpid.

Every note is delivered with white-hot sincerity in Coote's rich-toned voice. The German betrays only an occasional anglicism in the picky listener's

Brightness and warmth: Chen Reiss brings sincerity to the Mendelssohns

ear. Drake's piano similarly glows; he draws an exquisite sound from the instrument, the playing consistently elegant and restrained, with rare moments of prominence. I welcomed the rackety, clattering preludes to 'Rastlose Liebe' and 'Der Musensohn'.

Their approach perfectly suits reflective, slow songs like 'Abenstern', 'Litanei', 'Nacht und Träume' and several others. By the end, listeners may long for more variety, more surprises, especially in repertoire so frequently heard. That said, they have thought carefully about the sequence, ensuring an effective alternation of moods.

A closing observation: most of the songs are split into individual tracks per verse, resulting in a cumbersome 50 tracks. No difference on a CD player, but fiddly online, and inexplicable. That aside, the recording quality is clear and warm. *Natasha Loges*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Bach Inspired

Works by JS Bach, Charlotte Harding, Gavin Higgins, Carmen Ho, Des Oliver, Héloïse Werner and JB Wilson
The Bach Choir; Faust Chamber Orchestra/David Hill
Stone Records 5060192781182 33:57 mins

Faced with repurposing its cancelled performances of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* during lockdown, the Bach Choir invited six composers to choose one of the work's chorales, to select a text that in some way responded to it, and to write something suitable for online rehearsal. The result is six varied miniatures, each with its own soundworld drawing on the resources of an instrumental quintet offering piano, cello, oboe, horn and percussion. And last summer it finally became possible to record the set in live, in-person sessions, each work prefaced by the chorale that inspired it. (A shame that the opening Bach verse has such a clunky 19th-century translation: 'O sacred head surrounded by crown of piercing thorn'!)

Among the responses, Charlotte Harding enlists the writings of Hildegard of Bingen, clothing them in plush, enveloping harmonies that work towards a radiant sunburst of a climax; Gavin Higgins on the other hand is stirred by Blake into a howl of outraged anger tempered by reflective contrasts. Héloïse Werner opts for French, underscoring a brief excerpt from Rimbaud's *Les Illuminations* with a pungent palette including incantatory chanting and lithe rhythms that prefigure the concluding dance imperative. Throughout all the composers' changing demands, the choir repays David Hill's fastidious and disciplined direction with impressive precision and – when required – attack; and for those who have forgotten the sound of 'Choral Society Bach', the well-upholstered, hallowed a cappella chorales themselves sound like a reassuring ancient commentary echoing down the ages. An imaginative project, sympathetically realised. *Paul Riley*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

The Landscape of the Polyphonists

Works by Févin, Gombert, Josquin, Ockeghem et al
Huelgas Ensemble/Paul van Nevel
DHM 19439955002 70:42 mins (2 discs)

Paul van Nevel has been recording medieval music since 1971. This, his latest project, seems to have two purposes: to give a potted account of the development of Franco-Flemish polyphony c1400–c1550, and to show how the landscape of the local areas from which the composers came is embodied in their music.

The earliest composer here is Johannes Hasprois, who died c1428. His 'Ma douce amour' is an intricate work and the resonant acoustic does not help the texture, nor does the slightly lax approach to rhythm. The group is more at home in later pieces such as l'Héritier's motet 'Locutus est Dominus' (c1552) the clamorous sounds of which they bring to a captivating conclusion.

The landscape angle is slightly odd. We are not talking here about how the sounds of a landscape might be replicated (babbling brooks, birdsong etc), or its musical associations quoted (folksong etc), or even how a composer's emotional attachment might be expressed. Rather (according to van Nevel) the landscape itself replicates 'the spirit of its culture in a powerful way'. Hence Baston's 'Ung souvenir' embodies 'misty Artois' (though the lines are sung with great clarity), Gombert's 'O malheureuse journée' reflects the desolation of the Lele Valley (though it is performed rather stolidly), and Ockeghem's Sanctus is actually modeled in part on a work by Dufay who grew up elsewhere. Luckily some real landscaping can be heard in Hesdin's motet 'Parasti' where the performers shape the form and contour the dynamics splendidly. *Anthony Pryer*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★

A Room of Mirrors

Early Baroque songs and arias by Calestani, D'India, Turini et al
Emiliano Gonzalez Toro, Zachary Wilder (tenor); I Gemelli
Gemelli Factory GEFA001/1 57:56 mins

The room referred to in the title here is quite crowded since it contains ten composers, each of them from the generation following Monteverdi. As for its reflective mirrors we see works that either directly parody the master's style, or set the texts that he set, or engage with similar topics. The two tenors, Emiliano Gonzalez Toro and Zachary Wilder, are both famous exponents of Baroque repertoire and bring with them great skill and nuanced understanding.

Perhaps the most captivating parody of Monteverdi's style is Gregori's 'Mai non disciolgasi'. It alludes to the former's duet 'Zefiro torna' through fascinating allusions to his themes and style. Toro and Wilder pull out all the stops with some fast-paced bravura singing, and in Calestani's 'Damigella tutta bella' (which sets the same text as a work from Monteverdi's 1607 *Scherzi* collection) they produce lilting cross rhythms with enough panache to inspire dancers in an Irish jig festival. In d'India's 'Giunto alla tomba' where Tancredi laments the death of Clorinda, they respond adeptly to the dark harmonic shifts and the tragic meaning (they sing Tasso's original text, though the booklet prints a different one for lines 3-6). D'India's 'Dialogo della rosa' is different again with a flirtatious pastoral dialogue between Tirsi and Mopso. The vocal lines in this piece are simpler, so the repeated sections might have attracted some extra decoration. Throughout this collection I Gemelli's superb instrumental accompaniments manage to be simultaneously intricate and delicate. *Anthony Pryer*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

PAUL MARC MITCHELL

NEW RELEASES

SUPRAPHON

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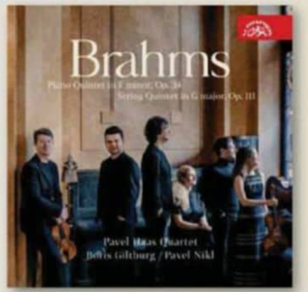

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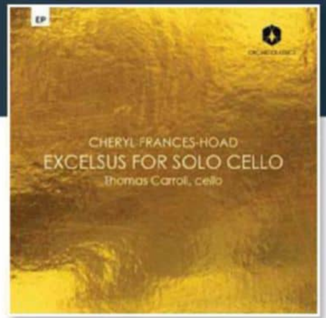

ORC100188
Excelsus
by Cheryl Frances-Hoad
Thomas Carroll, *cello*
Cellist Thomas Carroll plays Cheryl Frances-Hoad's Excelsus, a seven-movement suite for solo cello. This new EP represents the world-premiere recording of a profound and beautiful work.

ORC100196
Multiple
Nic Pendlebury, *electric viola*
Violist Nic Pendlebury presents a unique album of music transcribed for electric viola, including famous works by Steve Reich and Thomas Tallis, transcribed using loops and multitracking to create multiple layers of sound.

ORC100191
Rachmaninov
Suites for two pianos
Marianna Shirinyan & Dominik Wizjan
Pianists Marianna Shirinyan and Dominik Wizjan perform a pair of wonderful works for two pianos by Sergei Rachmaninov, on an album filled with the composer's characteristic virtuosity and aching expressivity.

ORC100190
Bassoon Steppes
Lola Descours, *bassoon*
Paloma Kouider, *piano*
A prize-winner of the prestigious Tchaikovsky competition, Lola Descours performs a rich programme of music transcribed for bassoon and piano, partnered by Paloma Kouider, with whom she has made several of the arrangements heard on the album.

Chamber

CHAMBER CHOICE

Captivating Schubert works from Mullova and Beatson

Julian Haylock **enjoys the duo's meticulous approach to these warmly delivered pieces for violin and piano**

A talent for texture: Viktoria Mullova's performance is detailed

BENJAMIN EALOVEGA, MAIKE HELBIG

Schubert

Violin Sonata in A, D574; Rondo brillant in B minor, D895; Fantasie in C, D934

Viktoria Mullova (violin), Alasdair Beatson (fortepiano)

Signum Cassics SIGCD 706 62:02 mins

Listening to these profoundly intimate performances is to be reminded how the evolution of both piano and violin has reshaped the way Schubert's music is perceived. The sonic and sustaining power both instruments are now capable of (not to mention the enhanced size of performing venues) has resulted in slower rates of resonance-decay, a tendency to raise dynamic levels, and enhanced potentials for legato-cantabile via lashings of vibrato and portamento espressivo. To effectively play instruments such as Schubert would have recognised requires super-refined technique and boundless musical imagination – there is simply nowhere to hide.

To hear Alasdair Beatson's exquisitely subtle rendering of the C major Fantasie's opening oscillations, and the way Viktoria Mullova segues into the fluttering textures as though she is merely breathing on her strings, is to enter a world in which every tiny gesture is of vital significance. The following *Allegretto* is all the more poignant for not having its underlying sense of discomfort cushioned by washes of ambience, while the sublime *Andantino* variations third section is buoyed by Mullova's and Beatson's captivating warmth and meticulously articulated bonhomie.

> The sublime *Andantino* variations third section appears to float on air

They finish with the unnerving B minor *Rondo brillant*, its overtly dramatic nature often leading to it being played with an inappropriately Beethovenian menace. Here it emerges as a nerve-shredding sequence of differentiated musical imaginings, brought within terrifyingly close proximity of one another. In context, the major key coda sounds more like desperation than consolation.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

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Beethoven

String Quartets, Op. 18 Nos 4-6

Chiaroscuro Quartet

BIS BIS-2498 (CD/SACD) 79:55 mins

Spruce, clean-sounding, finely articulated with sparing use of vibrato – this is definitely modern Beethoven. It's hard to imagine anything less like the plush, expressively orotund Amadeus Quartet versions that remain a gold standard for some. The light touch can be very refreshing: I'd never have believed that the finale of Op. 18 No. 5 could be so delicate, almost ethereal, and the gain in textural clarity – to say nothing of a sense of mischievous playfulness – in No. 4's *Andante scherzoso* is a high point of this disc for me. In fact, the Chiaroscuro Quartet's refusal to treat the C minor Quartet as some kind of *Sturm und Drang* tragedy is definitely a plus. What often tended to sound like inexplicable quirky intrusions now make so much more sense – paradox is at the heart of this music.

The delicacy can be revealing. Following with the score, I was brought up short again by the realisation of how much of this music is marked *piano* or *pianissimo*. The Beethoven who seems to want to lull you into a false sense of security then dig you energetically in the ribs seems a long way off. But there are times when something a bit more robust would have been welcome (the first movement of No. 6 for instance), and the sense you get with, say, the Takács Quartet, of ploughing a deep emotional furrow is largely absent. Despite some wonderful things here, as a whole this doesn't quite convince. *Stephen Johnson*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Edmund Finnis

String Quartets Nos 1 & 2

Manchester Collective

Bedroom Community HVALUR42 28:42 mins

Having collaborated on several projects to date, Edmund Finnis and the Manchester Collective enjoy a synergy that shines through this short but exquisite mini-album comprising his first and second string quartets. Presented in reverse order, the Second was co-commissioned by the Collective and plunges, if anything, deeper into the intensely intimate, subtle world of the First, composed in 2018.

Finnis has spoken of his love of communicating through sound, and of his desire to create beauty. Both are wonderfully achieved here, in music that's exceptionally refined but never rarefied thanks to a graininess that speaks to the physicality of touch and breath.

Both works explore worlds of colour as if illuminated from the inside through the push-pull of timbre, texture and shape; not so much moment by moment – though the lines are fluently crafted – but through the creation of a musical space that's at once richly inward looking and expansive.

No. 2 has four movements while No. 1 'Aloysius' has five, its penultimate movement inspired by Byrd's hymn, 'Christe, qui lux es et dies'. Here especially the echoes of consort music abound, the whole performed with captivating skill and a sense of searching co-adventure. *Steph Power*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Gipps

Winds of Change – Chamber Works for Horn

Ben Goldscheider (horn), Mary Bevan (soprano), Huw Watkins (piano); London Chamber Orchestra/ Hannah von Wiehler

Three Worlds TWR0012 76:49 mins

Ruth Gipps's discography continues to expand, and the latest album, entitled *Winds of Change*, blows a chronological path through the conservative but feisty British composer's chamber music featuring wind instruments – especially the horn, the instrument played by her son, Lance Baker.

The earliest is *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* of 1943, a pungent setting of the Norwegian folktale recorded with the spirited narrator (Ruth Rosales) rather dominating the sound balance. The last is a typically expressive and fibrous sonata for alto trombone or horn from 1995, one of many works here featuring the golden-toned horn of Ben Goldscheider, the best champion yet of her quicksilver Horn Concerto. Some other pieces are parlour music, congenial trifles written for friends and family, though the Octet and Sinfonietta, from the 1980s, aim for greater breadth and substance.

Clotted textures are always a risk if eight wind soloists are burbling together, and Gipps's habit of weaving tapestries of long-legged melodies doesn't increase clarity in her otherwise mellifluous Octet. The air's much clearer with the wider colour palette of the Sinfonietta for ten wind players (plus an imaginatively deployed tam-tam), though a degree of tedium enters with its *Scherzo*'s obsessive chewing of short motifs. Another ten wind players are needed for the 1958 *Seascape*, though it sounds more like a pastoral landscape than a buffeting in the briny. If not essential listening, there are modest pleasures in all this skilfully and tightly written music, and plenty of virtuosity among the players. *Geoff Brown*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★

Daring and dazzling: horn player Felix Klieser shines in Mozart

Haydn • Mozart

Haydn: Horn Concertos Nos 1 & 2; **Mozart:** Horn Quintet, K407; Four arias (arr. horn and string quartet)

Felix Klieser (horn); Zemlinsky Quartet

Berlin Classics 0302346BC 59:29 mins

With the exception of Mozart's Horn Quintet K407, these pieces are all arrangements. The Mozart, with its distinctive dark string ensemble in which the lone violin is outnumbered by a pair of violas, is in any case by far the most distinguished of the instrumental works here.

Certainly, not a great deal is lost in having the Haydn concertos performed in chamber versions, as here: in the First Horn Concerto the wind instruments in the original version are purely accompanimental, and they don't play at all in the slow movement; while the Second Horn Concerto – which is almost certainly not an authentic piece by Haydn at all – is scored for horn and strings alone. Felix Klieser copes brilliantly with the concertos' wide-ranging horn writing, and he gives a dazzling, risk-taking performance of the virtuoso finale of Mozart's Quintet.

The transcriptions of Mozart operatic numbers are a mixed success. 'Voi che sapete' from *The Marriage of Figaro* inevitably sounds a little heavy on the horn, and the outer sections of Don Ottavio's 'Il mio tesoro' from *Don Giovanni* also lack a certain grace and elegance (Mozart's original scoring has them delicately accompanied by muted strings and pizzicato basses). On the other hand, Tamino's opening aria from *The Magic Flute* is beautiful, and it forms an ideal showcase for the exceptional purity of Klieser's tone. The same is true of the slow movements in the concertos on what is an altogether enjoyable disc. The members of the Zemlinsky Quartet offer fine support throughout. *Misha Donat*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Messiaen

Quartet for the End of Time

Amatis Trio; Ib Hausmann (clarinet)

CAvi-music AVI8553042 46:22 mins

Olivier Messiaen's *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* resists confinement. The premiere in the bitter January of 1941 lifted the composer's fellow prisoners of war beyond their circumstances within Stalag VIII-A. The music refuses to be strait-jacketed into conventional bars or rhythms, while its apocalyptic subject looks outside the existence of time. It is a work beyond normal limits that lives in the moment of performance and generally eludes capture by microphones.

This new recording from the Amatis Trio with clarinettist Ib Hausmann does better than many others. There is some exceptionally fine playing, especially from Lea Hausmann and Samuel Shepherd on violin and cello respectively. The frenzied eruptions at either end of the second movement, 'Vocalise, pour l'Ange qui annonce la fin du temps', have rarely had such joyous abandon, while both add some delicious and judicious slides in their heartfelt 'Louange' movements.

Ib Hausmann is suitably mesmerising in 'Abîme des oiseaux', though might fall more dejectedly back into the abyss, while pianist Mengjie Han displays remarkable control throughout. What is needed, though, is more of everything; more space, more freedom and even more nuance to break the proprieties of normal music-making. This wonderful playing does not quite break through to Messiaen's music of extremes. *Christopher Dingle*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Versatile virtuoso: Martin Fröst is a musical multitasker

Romantic & Virtuoso Works for Flutes & Piano

Works by F Doppler, K Doppler and Kuhlau
Noemi Gyori, Gergely Madaras (flute), Alexander Ullman (piano)
Rubicon RCD1078 77:38 mins

The piano has Liszt, the violin has Paganini – and the flute has the Doppler brothers, the 19th-century duo responsible for some of the most charming and virtuosic music in the woodwind repertoire. Unlike Liszt and Paganini, Franz and Karl Doppler are only well known to flautists, despite recordings from Emmanuel Pahud (Farao) and Claudi Arimany's excellent 12-volume set (Capriccio). The Dopplers were born in Lemberg, now Lviv in Ukraine, and took on prominent performing-composing roles across Europe. Just as Liszt made the most of the newly invented piano's technical abilities, so the Dopplers embraced the flute's freshly patented Boehm system, which opened up increasingly complex possibilities. The brothers' idiomatic pieces are expertly played by husband-and-wife team Noemi Gyori and Gergely Madaras, who, having spent recent years pursuing their individual performing careers, reconnected with the duets during the pandemic.

The light-hearted *Fantaisie sur des motifs hongrois* and easy-listening *Andante et Rondo* are supplemented by the darker *Rigoletto-fantaisie*, a transcription of the Verdi opera that Franz and Karl Doppler toured widely. There are extended sections where the flutes have the same rhythm (typical of the era); Gyori and Madaras make the timing appear deceptively simple. As elsewhere, the ensemble work between flutes and piano (Alexander Ullman) is virtually faultless. Friedrich Kuhlau's three-movement trio is the filling in a Doppler sandwich: as a pianist and friend of Beethoven, Kuhlau's work – straddling Classical and Romantic styles – gives Ullman the chance to be collaborator rather than accompanist, a role he clearly relishes. *Claire Jackson*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Night Passages

Works by Alfvén, JS Bach, Cesti, Corea, Handel, Purcell, Rameau, Rodgers, D Scarlatti et al
Martin Fröst (clarinet), Sébastien Dubé (bass), Roland Pöntinen (piano)
Sony Classical G0100045976027 48:26 mins

Martin Fröst's latest album presents a thrilling display of virtuosity. In this, his fourth release for Sony Classical, Fröst curates an eclectic mix of Baroque music (JS Bach, Cesti, Handel, Henry Purcell, Rameau and Domenico Scarlatti), arrangements of songs by Chick Corea, Gordon Jenkins and Richard Rodgers, with art and folk music from his native Sweden. Fröst's six poetic distillations in the booklet notes project the autobiographical nature of his repertoire. In testament to his versatility, Fröst appears as performer, composer and co-arranger.

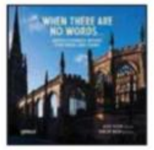
Baroque offerings, particularly by Purcell, Scarlatti and the outer two Rameau tracks, display Fröst's rapid staccato, but his range of articulation is not perhaps quite as expressive as the music demands. Many of these arrangements prioritise the clarinet's bright middle register, instead of revealing the instrument's capacity for warmer and richer timbres. A welcome contrast comes in pianist Roland Pöntinen's arrangement of Rameau's *Musette tendre et Rondeau* where Fröst revels in the delicacy and sensitivity of the clarinet's lower register. Of the two Corea numbers, *Rhumba* shows Fröst at his best, dispatching glissandos and virtuosic roulades, cleverly matching his sound to partner the pizzicato bass. The album's highlight is surely the two *Dorotea* tracks, which combine Fröst's agility, dexterity of tonguing and timbral variety.

The album makes a welcome change from the endless recycling of clarinet warhorses elsewhere in the catalogue. Plaudits to Sony for giving Fröst freedom to traverse this breadth of repertoire, highlighting both his own versality and that of the clarinet. *Ingrid Pearson*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

When There Are No Words

Works by Bolcom, Britten, Haas, Hindemith, Siqueira and Slavický
Alex Klein (oboe), Phillip Bush (piano)
Cedille CDR 90000 208 75:51 mins



The booklet notes for this release go to inordinate lengths to link these works to a common theme of existential stress: the Hindemith and Britten reflecting the menace of the 1930s, fulfilled in the fate of Pavel Haas, a gifted Janáček pupil murdered all too young at Auschwitz; the Bolcom composed in 1980 after a discussion of the likelihood of nuclear war; the Sequeira and Slavický by composers whose lives culminated in exile and political suppression respectively.

Hindemith's two-movement Sonata is in fact typical of his middle-period style: energetic, no-nonsense with a touch of personal melancholy. Britten's *Temporal Variations*, equally typically, draw the most striking contrasts from the barest material, while Haas rhapsodises in an idiom freely mixing chromaticism and modality. And if the fine-spun Bolcom *Aubade* is unusually austere for a composer more often beholden to popular sources, the Siqueira Etudes charmingly evoke his Brazilian background while the Slavický Suite proves highly inventive in a style somewhere between Poulenc and Shostakovich.

Though 75 minutes of busy, closely-recorded oboe and piano texture may seem a lot for one sitting, they are delivered with dexterity and conviction in beautifully rounded tone without acidity by Alex Klein, sometime principal oboe of the Chicago Symphony, with Phillip Bush a vigorous and resourceful accompanist. *Bayan Northcott*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

BACKGROUND TO... Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time*

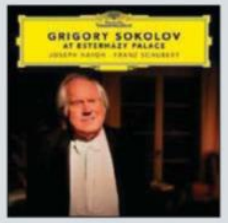
Messiaen, a medic during World War Two, was captured and interred at a German POW camp (known as Stalag VIII-A) in Görlitz in 1940. He wasn't the only musician there and, allowed access to the simple tools required to write music, wrote a trio for fellow inmates – violinist Jean de Boulaire, cellist Étienne Pasquier and clarinettist Henry Akoka. Then came this work, inspired by a text from the *Book of Revelation*. Messiaen played piano, the group rehearsing in a camp bathroom until a premiere was allowed in January 1941.

MATS BÄCKER, GETTY

INSTRUMENTAL CHOICE

Magic and majesty in this live recording

Grigory Sokolov is on top form in his Esterházy recital, says ***Michael Church***



Grigory Sokolov at Esterházy Palace

Haydn: Piano Sonatas Nos 32, 47 & 49; **Schubert:** Impromptus, D935 etc; **plus encores by Chopin, Debussy, Griboyedov and Rameau**
Grigory Sokolov (piano)
DG 486 1849 119:29 mins (2 discs)

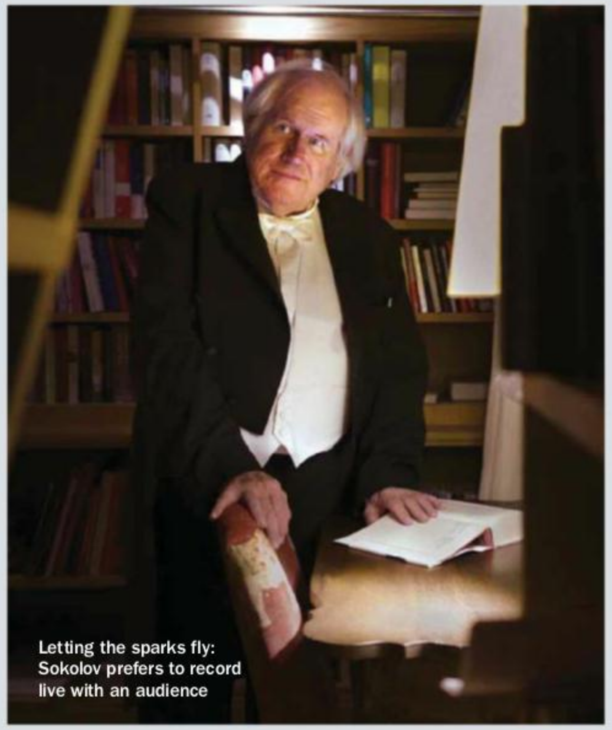
Grigory Sokolov wants all his recordings to be live with an audience, because the spark which passes between him and his listeners is his inspiration. The Haydnsaal of the Esterházy palace in Eisenstadt, where these recordings were made in 2018, was the perfect location – not only thanks to its acoustic, but also because it was where Haydn himself frequently performed.

Sokolov is in top form, with some of his chosen pieces having the freshness of a new revelation. The first Impromptu (marked *Allegro moderato*) begins with such slow deliberation that one fears it will never get airborne, but when it does, the effect is majestic, as details normally skated over yield up their secrets. The architecture of the fourth Impromptu becomes magical.

Sokolov brings a light transparent touch and a sweetly singing tone

What Sokolov does with the Haydn sonatas is as fascinating. No. 49 in C sharp minor is seldom performed, presumably because it's almost provocatively awkward in places. And particularly in its trite little *Scherzo*, which is a challenge to both players and audience. Sokolov brings resonant grandeur to No. 47, but the real revelation here is the G minor sonata No. 32. I heard him play that at Verbier, but his approach here is strikingly different – intimate and delicately jewelled. He brings to the work a light, transparent touch and a sweetly singing tone, and he varies the pace in ways which might seem capricious, but which never denature the line. The technical inventiveness of the *Allegretto* never gets in the way of the emotional eloquence which this great pianist finds in it. The encores, especially the Rameau, are a treat.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



Letting the sparks fly: Sokolov prefers to record live with an audience

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JS Bach

Cello Suites
Bruno Philippe (cello)
Harmonia Mundi HMM902684.85 116:31 mins (2 discs)

Bruno Philippe pre-empts the question 'why another lockdown set of solo Bach?' His performances provide a robust answer. Here is a highly likeable set, crackling with character. His starting point was, naturally, the most 'French' suite, the C minor, which he describes as 'over-dotted and distanced'. In his hands a billowing freedom transforms its sombre mood, and the fugue is veritably jaunty.

The Frenchman is known as a young Titan of the modern cello but has worked with Ensemble Jupiter, who 'opened up a new world', and handles gut strings and Baroque bow with impressive fluency. From the moment Philippe injects a flourish into the G major Prelude you know this will be fun: here is an artist unafraid of artful embroidering, and, in the faster dances, does so with a delicious sense of danger as he only just succeeds in tucking a flurry of notes into the beat.

I was particularly struck by the robust joy he finds in the G major Courante and C major Prelude, contrasting beautifully with his poignant Allemandes, where he weaves space into the flow, and he rustles up a folk fiddle-like frenzy in the Bourrées and Gigues. Speeds may be moderate, energy is not.

Only the E flat major Suite, a trap for so many, doesn't quite come off. That extraordinarily awkward Prelude needs a transforming grace (achieved by David Watkin, Jean-Guihen Queyras and Steven Isserlis among others), and here it is leaden-footed.

He says of the recording 'this is one where I present myself most intimately'. His personality certainly radiates through, but we're also aware of his every breath, which can be distracting. *Helen Wallace*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

JS Bach

Complete Lute Works
Evangelina Mascardi (lute)
Arcana A529 110:52 mins (2 discs)

While the lute was very much an instrument of choice in the 16th and 17th centuries, it maintained some popularity in the 18th. JS Bach knew some of Germany's finest lutenists, among them Silvius Weiss, a colleague of his son Wilhelm Friedemann, and enjoyed 'extra fine' music making with him on at least one occasion. Nevertheless, his extant works for the lute were not originally intended for the instrument and comprise

reworkings of compositions for solo cello, harpsichord and violin.

Undeterred by their somewhat hazy provenance – outlined in some excellent accompanying notes – Evangelina Mascardi produces consistently idiomatic performances on three agreeably resonant copies of lutes by a contemporary of Bach. The 'Suite for the lute by JS Bach' presented first is a creative arrangement of the Fifth solo Cello Suite. Mascardi's qualities as a player are clear from the start: convincingly improvisatory in the introduction and superbly fluent in the subsequent *Allegro* while making light of the additional chords added in the lute version. Her command of the ebb and flow of such pieces as the first movement of the 'Prelude for the Lute' is underpinned by a convincing, understated control of the rhythmic structure and makes for continuously satisfying listening. Where virtuosity is called for, as in the prelude to the Partita BWV 1006a – best known in its version for solo violin – it is unforced and matched by an understated delicacy in the dances. If not quite flawless, these well recorded performances are abundantly rewarding. *Jan Smaczny*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

JS Bach

Solo Violin Partitas Nos 1-3
Linus Roth (violin)
Evil Penguin EPRC 0040 81:54 mins

Whereas the majority of players tend to focus on the pseudo-contrapuntal nature of Bach's solo violin music, often snatching at multi-stopped chords and even gently fading out the lower note in sustained double-stops – in fact anything to help sustain the illusion of the 'long line' – Linus Roth positively relishes the harmonic implications of Bach's structural plan. Multiple stops are gently caressed and double-stops sustained with golden-toned purity as moments to savour the effect of where the music has arrived harmonically and where it is heading. More than ever, the famous opening of the D minor *Chaconne* sounds like an organ mapping out the music's harmonic continuity.

The other thing that marks out Roth's playing is its Henryk Szeryng-like consistency of dynamic and tonal-intonational purity. If the modern tendency is to almost exaggerate the music's potential for dynamic contrast and varied articulation, Roth sustains his flawlessly smooth, luxuriously toned sonority, so that each movement emerges in terms of its majestic formal perfection, undistracted by interpretive ticks and quirks. Few players can resist turning the brilliant opening Preludio of the E major Partita into a bit of a showpiece, but Roth transmutes the temptation for rapid string-crossing bravado into longer-term rewards. *Julian Haylock*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Golden tone: Linus Roth shines in Bach Partitas

Chopin

Scherzos Nos 1-4; Polonaise No. 7, 'Polonaise-fantaisie etc
Valentina Lisitsa (piano)
Naïve V7700 64:10 mins

It was with Chopin that Valentina Lisitsa launched herself as a YouTube star, when her 2007 set of the Etudes reached the number one classical spot on Amazon. Her career since then has been marked by both musical and political controversy, and much of the Lisitsa 'phenomenon' is encapsulated by this latest recording, spanning early to late Chopin. The disc's opening is little short of grotesque for the way in which she launches herself at the Scherzo No. 1 in B minor – its first bars sounding brittle and taken as fast as possible, the haunting Polish carol that supplies contrast sounding slow and sentimentalised. Overall, the performance is incoherent, and the other Scherzos suffer similarly from Lisitsa's erratic approach. She also can surprise, and in the *Polonaise-Fantaisie* finds – after a bad-tempered opening – something to say. The more straightforward *Andante spianato et Grande Polonaise Brillante* receives a spirited performance, and she makes impressively light work of the *Fantaisie-Impromptu*'s flurries.

Having been dropped by Decca, Lisitsa is now recording prolifically for Naïve: though artistic judgement can be questioned, the bad timing of this release is probably no one's fault. Back in 2014 the pianist, who usually identifies as Ukrainian-American, was a vocal supporter of Putin's invasion of Crimea, but in this recording's booklet she stresses some Polish roots through her maternal grandfather. That hardly guarantees authentic Chopin, but she proves that there is no one way of playing this music. *John Allison*

PERFORMANCE ★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Rachmaninov

Piano Sonata No. 1; Moments musicaux, Op. 16 etc
Steven Osborne (piano)
Hyperion CDA68365 72:12 mins

Trust Steven Osborne to cast candlelight on the distant voices and supernatural happenings others often miss in Rachmaninov. This may not be the most consistently sonorous interpretation of the massive First Piano Sonata – for that, turn to Lugansky (Naïve) or Hayroudinoff (Onyx) – but I suspect that Osborne is pacing himself, and us, across the course of the vast opening *Allegro moderato*, and when he pulls the full stops out, it's awe inspiring (try the mid-point for the full dynamic range, from huge *fortissimo* to mysterious becalming). The ultimate build in the finale is astounding, too. Disquiet continues in the utterly original D minor Prelude Rachmaninov wrote, but never saw published in his lifetime, in 1917, with Osborne providing a segue into the 'Fragments'; the oddly-named 'Oriental Sketch' makes a good third movement to a very odd Sonatina-like sequence, also not without its creepy moments.

I didn't know that Rachmaninov had made a piano version of the Nunc Dimittis in the *Vespers*, the tenor-and-wordless-chorus movement performed at his funeral; it's the only truly calm stretch of the recital. As Osborne presents them, the innocuously-titled *Moments musicaux* are half phantoms retreating into darkness and pausing for obsession before finally melting into ever-more-brilliant day; the full sequence is vital. Again, the haunting is absolute, the final pounding C major chords stunning. A little more brilliance in the treble wouldn't have gone amiss – that may be to do with the recording – but the sound suits the enigmatic quality of so much here rather well. *David Nice*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Black Renaissance Woman

Works by Bonds, Hagan, Holt, Jackson King, and Price
Samantha Ege, John Paul Ekin (piano)
Lorelt LNT145 63:43 mins

Lorelt (Lontano Records) is a musical *salon des refusés* set up in 1992 with the aim of promoting important repertoire neglected by major labels. And this is its second recording from pianist and musicologist Samantha Ege, who wears her mission on her sleeve: her discovery of Florence Price set her on the path she is now successfully pursuing, as a champion of forgotten women composers from the early and mid-20th century.

Four of the five composers on this disc were Black and, as Ege points out, they were at the forefront of a movement which had its ancestral roots in slavery and its actual roots in routine Jim Crow oppression. They used their artistry and activism, she says, to articulate visions of freedom for a new age. They operated in places like Chicago's South Side and New York's Harlem, and with their concertos and symphonies forced their way into concert halls which had hitherto been a white preserve.

All five were hyper-productive both as composers and performers, but it's sad that the only extant piece left by the ebullient Nora Holt should be her Joplinesque *Negro Dance*. Helen Hagan's Piano Concerto in C minor is an ambitious work which revels in splendid Chopin-inspired effects, but its declamatory mode becomes wearing: we should not over-praise works because of what they stand for politically. Betty Jackson King's *Four Seasonal Sketches* are very accomplished salon music.

But the works by Margaret Bonds and Florence Price reflect technical and aesthetic mastery of the first order. Price's *Piano Concerto in One Movement* starts off in the Beethoven tradition but finally weaves Negro Spiritual tonalities into Romantic chromaticism with graceful ease. And Margaret Bonds's *Spiritual Suite* incorporates 'Wade in the water' in a gorgeously subtle marriage of styles. Ege's pianism is delicately inflected throughout. *Michael Church*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Musical mission: Samantha Ege uncovers some overlooked gems

JASON DODD, DAN CARABAS

The Future is Female – *Vol. 1 In Nature*

Works by Bon, Carreño, Gribbin, Jambor, Kaprálová, Kashperova, Fanny Mendelssohn, FC Dillon, Beglarian and MD Watkins
Sarah Cahill (piano)
First Hand FHR131 71:40 mins

The feminist slogan 'The Future is Female' is shown on the front cover, held up on a protest sign. And as this recording shows, the past was female too, it's just that women are often written out of it.

Here, then, is an alternative history of solo piano music – and one that's delivered with real conviction by pianist Sarah Cahill.

Canonical chronologies might take us from JS Bach to Thomas Adès. Cahill begins with Anna Bon (her B minor Sonata of 1757) and ends with Mary D Watkins (*Summer Days* of 2020), taking us on a journey that feels like an ever-growing wave, each piece somehow building on the last yet always taking us into new territory. The first in a three-volume series, this disc takes its theme as nature, whether that's Teresa Carreño's evocative *Un rêve en mer* or Fannie Charles Dillon's chirruping *Birds at Dawn*, but it remains a loose inspiration rather than a straitjacket.

The programme really hits its stride with two of Vítězslava Kaprálová's *April Preludes*, harmonically rich and adventurous pieces written by the Czech composer in 1937. They have been recorded a handful of times already but deserve every outing. And Cahill really digs into the fascinating premiere that follows: Agi Jambor's Piano Sonata. Jambor was a Hungarian child prodigy – who reputedly played Mozart before she spoke – and in 1949, having found refuge in the United States from the Nazis, she composed this striking piece dedicated to the victims of the Auschwitz concentration camp. It's worth hearing the disc for this sonata alone, but Eve Beglarian's poetic manifesto *Fireside* (2001) and Deirde Gribbin's searching *Unseen* (2017) are two other highlights. *Rebecca Franks*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Slavic Roots

Tabakova: Modétudes; **Vladigerov:** 11 Variations for Piano on a Bulgarian Folk Song 'Majestic Old Mountain'; Impressions
Marina Staneva (piano)
Chandos CHAN 20251 83:38 mins

After suffering decades of neglect outside his native Bulgaria, Pancho Vladigerov, and his piano music in particular, seem to be enjoying an unexpected level of interest on record recently.

Marina Staneva delivers these piquant and atmospheric character pieces with passion and commitment, bringing a wealth of colour to the heightened Scriabinesque chromatic harmonies in 'Langueur', 'Étreinte' and 'Caresse', but perhaps sounding a tad cautious in the more extravagantly virtuosic passages of 'Élégance' and 'Le Rire'.

She pairs the *Impressions* with an impressive performance of one of Vladigerov's earliest works, the *11 Variations on the Bulgarian Folksong 'Majestic Mountain'*. It's an attractive work conceived in a late-Romantic musical language that owes much to Chopin and Rachmaninov, but on early acquaintance, doesn't reveal a particularly strong musical personality. In contrast, the Bulgarian-British composer Dobrinka Tabakova presents a very imaginative exploration of simple melodic patterns and harmonic constellations in her seven *Modétudes*, performed here with great sensitivity. *Erik Levi*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

BACKGROUND TO...
Kaprálová's *April Preludes*

The *Dubnová Preludia*, Op. 13 are typical of Vítězslava Kaprálová's innovative style and a cornerstone of her piano repertoire. Written for pianist Rudolf Firkušný, one of many champions of the Czech-born composer's music, the four-part work features daring harmonic combinations. It was written in 1937, just three years before her untimely death; the composer (and aspiring conductor) soon moved to Paris, where she studied with Martinů and Charles Munch. Though written for Firkušný, it was premiered by pianist Dana Šetková.

Historical

Martin Cotton rounds up recordings by legends such as Barbirolli and Monteux

HISTORICAL CHOICE

Blazing Argerich 1965

A very fine remastering of a landmark final confirms the pianist's legendary reputation

Fiery spontaneity: Martha Argerich had the aura of greatness

GETTY

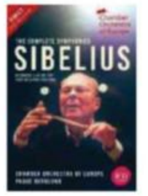
Chopin

Piano Concertos Nos 1 & 2* (Seventh International Fryderyk Chopin Piano Competition, 1965)
Martha Argerich, *Arthur Moreira Lima (piano); Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra/ Witold Rowicki
F Chopin Institute NIFCCD637 64:39 mins

It's easy to hear how the 24-year-old Martha Argerich emerged as the winner of the 1965 Chopin Piano Competition. Here she is in the final round, playing with fiery spontaneity in the First Concerto, capturing all its turbulence and wistfulness, with insouciant playfulness in the finale. Mind you, she has an exceptional lead from Witold Rowicki and the Warsaw Philharmonic, who set up a searing opening tutti before her arresting first entry. The sound in this issue is clearer than in previous incarnations I've heard, and the tonal range of orchestra and soloist is finely balanced and captured. Arthur Moreira Lima had been the favourite at the start of the competition, and might well have won in different circumstances. His playing in the Second Concerto is gentler than Argerich's, and the climaxes don't open out as much; sometimes the more decorative writing lacks the ultimate in definition and character, but the slow movement has a flow and sense of shaping that goes to the heart of the music. A very fine Chopin performance, but Argerich has the aura of greatness. ★★★★

June round-up

Following their recordings of ***Sibelius's Complete Symphonies***, ***Paavo Berglund*** and the ***Chamber Orchestra of Europe*** gave the complete cycle at the Helsinki Festival in 1998. The Finlandia Hall



is on the dry side, which sometimes emphasises the size of the orchestra – there were times when I longed for more strings. But there's some very distinguished playing, especially in the wind section, and Berglund never over-indulges the music, always a mistake with Sibelius. The video presentation over-relies on close-ups, and, as is often the case, has a restlessness in cutting which goes against the music's pulse. You can always shut your eyes. *(ICA DVD: ICAD 5162; Blu-ray: ICABD 5163)* ★★★

Once you have tuned your ears into the reverberant acoustic of Coventry Cathedral, this 1964 performance of ***Elgar's Symphony No. 2*** is a striking one from ***John Barbirolli*** and the ***BBC Symphony Orchestra***.

Tempos are considered, but there's no lack of tension, with the music in the bones of both orchestra and conductor. The broad sweep of the structure is assured, even if detail is missing in the more congested scoring – internal lines in the strings in particular are hard to discern, harps are often obscured, and the dynamic range of the mono recording is restricted. And yet, by the end, the journey has been utterly compelling. *(Barbirolli Society SJB 1107)* ★★★★

Elgar from America, Vol. 3 sees ***Barbirolli***'s return to the ***New York Philharmonic*** in 1959, after 16-years' absence. This orchestra is less familiar with the music, but the performance of the *Introduction and Allegro* has vibrancy and muscle, while *The Dream of Gerontius* is notable for the singing of Richard Lewis – his New York debut – freer than in his later studio recording. Even more impressive is the Canadian contralto Maureen Forrester, with a wide range of colour and emotion in her voice. The Westminster Choir takes a

while to settle, and are often backward in the sound, but this is another white-hot performance caught on the wing. *(SOMM ARIADNE 5015-2)* ★★★★

Klaus Tennstedt's partnership with the LPO was a golden era, and his beguiling way with music from the German tradition comes through in ***Jessye Norman Sings Strauss***, from 1986. Norman adds lustre to the already burnished orchestral playing in five songs, familiar from her studio version with Masur.

Interpretatively there's not much to choose between them, but she's more dramatic in characterising the insanity in the final scene from *Salomé* than in her complete recording. In between, there's the neoclassical suite from *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*, with some fine solo playing, although string tone could be leaner overall to capture the style more fully. *(LPO LPO 0122)* ★★★★

Leon Fleisher Live, Vol. 1 sees performances from the years just before he lost movement in his right hand in 1964, and give a flavour of his blazing pianism. In the two Brahms concertos from Tanglewood, ***Pierre Monteux*** ensures a tight orchestral balance, although there are some anxious moments along the way, and the recordings are somewhat restricted,

with a tendency to overload at climaxes. Sound is again a distraction in Mozart's K488, especially in the *Adagio*, where the tone of the piano is never quite stable. Most effective is the 1957 Salzburg Festival recording of K503, with Fleisher's poise enhanced by the stylish contribution of the Berlin Philharmonic under George Szell. *(Doremi DHR-8158/9)* ★★★

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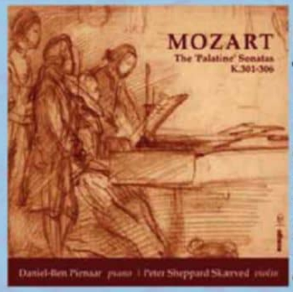

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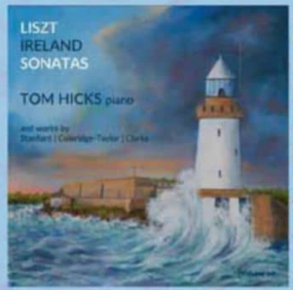

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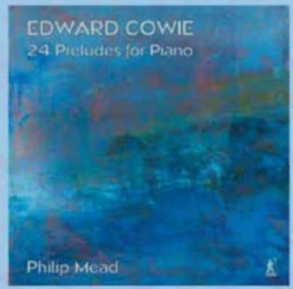

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Brief notes

Our selection this month sees moments of solace, revelatory sax and some Satie

Lera Auerbach 24 Preludes for Violin and Piano etc
Avita Duo *Hänssler Classic HC21059*

The Avita Duo really dig into Auerbach's music, drawing out the myriad moods of these two cycles. Written in 1999, the colourful *24 Preludes and Fugues* have a post-Prokofiev, post-Shostakovich flavour. The *Fragments* of 2001 are spiky, brooding, and furious. (RF) ★★★★★

Bacewicz • Tansman Piano Quintets
Julia Kociuban (piano); Messages Quartet *DUX DUX1792*

This is the second excellent recording of Bacewicz's Piano Quintets to emerge in the past few years. The 1952 Quintet No. 1 is full of flair, while the 1965 Quintet No. 2 finds the Polish composer pushing far into dissonant territory. Vivid playing. (RF) ★★★★

Barisons Three Preludes; Symphony No. 2
Liepāja Symphony Orchestra *SKANI LMIC132*

There's a lot to enjoy here, as the Latvian composer Pēteris Barisons (1904-47) ranges in style from a Mendelssohn-like lightness in the Three Preludes to the rich, red-blooded Romanticism of the Second Symphony, which also features a splendidly ominous march in the last movement. (JP) ★★★★

Castrucci 12 Violin Sonatas, Op. 1
Gerald Elias (violin), Pamela Palmer-Jones (harpsichord), Noriko Kishi (cello) *Centaur CRC 3932 3933*

Castrucci was a student of Corelli, though his works nonetheless exhibit their own brand of drama. Elias makes an elegant advocate for the composer and has followed faithfully his markings for ornaments, bowings and articulations in the original 1718 Amsterdam edition. (CS) ★★★

Enescu Piano Quartet No. 1 etc
Josu De Solaun (piano) et al *Naxos 8.573616*

Exquisitely crafted performances by a team of well-matched players are captured in a luminous acoustic on this recording of chamber works. Undiscovered until 1965, the Piano Trio offers the chance for all the players to shine, while the Piano Quartet's central *Andante mesto* is heartbreakingly beautiful. (CS) ★★★★★

Haydn Seven Last Words of our Saviour on the Cross
Kammerchor Stuttgart et al *Carus 83.520*

This recording of the choral version of Haydn's Passiontide work – completed a while after the orchestral original – sees conductor Frieder Bernius take a restrained approach, with the emphasis for the most part less on drama and more on beauty of sound and precision of performance. (JP) ★★★★

Mozart Bassoon Concerto etc
Peter Whelan (bassoon) et al *Linn Records CKD680*

This genial and amiable disc is a joy to listen to. Peter Whelan does Mozart's two surviving works for bassoon (the sonata and concerto) proud, ably partnered by Kristian Bezuidenhout and the Ensemble Marsyas, who also play the Serenade in C minor. (RF) ★★★★

Augusta Read Thomas Bell Illuminations
Various Artists *Nimbus NI 6427*

There's something wonderfully wild and restless about this collection of works. The opening piece is written for a carillon of 72 bells and bathes the listener in an aural haze of beauty and just a little delirium. Works for bells, strings and voices make for a disparate but impactful whole. (MB) ★★★

Satie Piano Works (Vol. 5)
Noriko Okawa (piano) *BIS BIS-2345*

This is the fifth volume in Ogawa's impressive survey of the French eccentric, but the least satisfying to date as a whole. That's down to the music's elusive nature, mostly drawn from Satie's early mystical period. Best dipped into. (RF) ★★★

Fernando Velázquez Viento
Johannes Moser (cello); Basque National Orchestra *Pentatone PTC 5186 977*

It's great to see the Spanish composer spread his wings beyond the cinema screen. Here he brings his innate sense of drama to a cello concerto, cantata and symphonic poem. Cellist Moser is a crucial ally, but Velázquez holds his own in what is a riveting collection of works. (MB) ★★★★

20th-Century Music for Unaccompanied Cello Works by Bloch, Cassadó, Britten et al
Benjamin Whitcomb (cello) *MSR Classics MS1798*

Cellist Benjamin Whitcomb's latest album has a pedestrian air about it – each note is carefully placed, but without that necessary spark of excitement. There's the feeling that these admittedly difficult compositions are testing Whitcomb's technical capabilities ever so slightly. (CS) ★★

Are You Still Somewhere? Works by Lavinia Meijer, Ryuichi Sakamoto, Zbigniew Preisner et al
Lavinia Meijer (harp) et al *Sony 19439946062*

The album's title implies loss and loneliness and, yes, much of it does have a feel of sitting in an empty room staring bleakly into space. Aside from brief moments from the likes of Preisner and Sakamoto, most of the material is by Lavinia Meijer herself, who is joined at the end by Iggy Pop. (JP) ★★★

A Celebration of Life in Death Works by Cavalli, Tunder et al
Anna Prohaska (soprano) et al *Alpha Classics ALPHA745*

A Dies Irae is an apt place for Prohaska to begin her musically wide-ranging exploration of 'life in death', and the gloom is leavened by lightness elsewhere. There are early musical delights, but the 'Eleanor Rigby' and 'Hallelujah' covers are marmite tracks. (RF) ★★★

English Music for Viola and Piano Works by Dunhill, Edmunds et al
Sarah-Jane Bradley (viola), John Lenehan (piano) *Dutton Epoch CDLX7390*

The pieces featured here were composed 1939-57 and mostly dedicated to the generation of British viola players who came after the better-known Tertis, Primrose et al. The quality of the works is surprisingly good, considering how swiftly they were forgotten, and the partnership of Bradley and Lenehan is classy indeed. (CS) ★★★★

Esther Abrami Works by Tchaikovsky, Alexis Ffrench et al
Esther Abrami (violin) et al *Sony Classical 19439933802*

Abrami's self-titled debut album is a pleasing patchwork of pieces, from familiar items in new arrangements to works by high-profile newcomers. Radio airplay is surely guaranteed for this playlist, the gloss of which is almost blinding. Some lovely moments. (MB) ★★★

Paris 1900 – The Art of the Oboe Works by Saint-Saëns et al
Alexandre Gattet (oboe), Laurent Wagschal (piano) *Indesens INDE155*

Gattet and Wagschal take us by the hand through a selection of turn-of-the-century French works. Theirs is a comforting presence, and while the programme is somewhat transportive in its meditative, pastel shades, you can have too much of a good thing. (MB) ★★★

Renewal? Choral works by Paul Smith, Walton, Cage et al
Voces8, Apollo5 *Voces8 Records VCM 135*

Consisting of familiar Walton and Harris plus new pieces by Donna McKevitt and Voces8 co-founder Paul Smith, this superbly devised programme leads us through a world of reflection and melancholy, though ends with a glimmer of light. A disc for the present time, immaculately sung. (JP) ★★★★★

The Saxophone Craze Works by Wiedoeft, Gershwin et al
Jonathan Radford (saxophone), Ashley Fripp (piano) *Champs Hill CHRCD166*

I'm not sure I've ever appreciated how lovely the saxophone can sound until hearing this. Radford shines a light on an early champion of the instrument, Rudy Wiedoeft, in this colourful selection of arrangements. Warmth, character and joy abound. (MB) ★★★★★

Solus et una Works by JS Bach & Brahms
Amit Peled (cello) *CTM Classics CTM005*

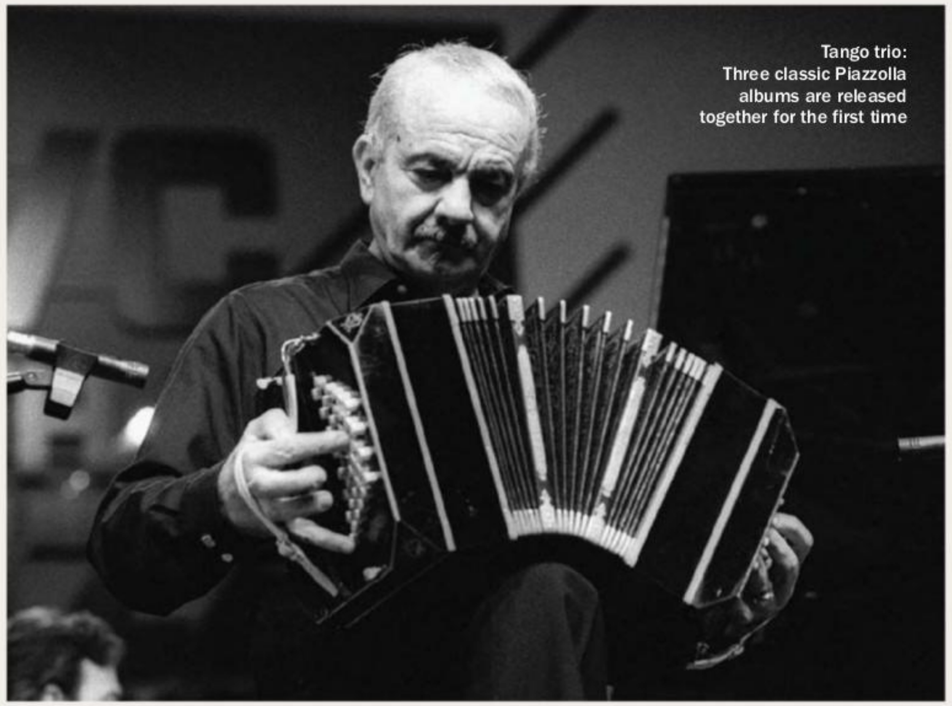
The title for this solo album translates as 'alone and together', a nod to the great number of cellists who turned to Bach as a means of solace during the pandemic. Perhaps a lighter touch might be preferable in places, but Peled consistently achieves a pleasing depth of tone. The Brahms *Andante* cello choir arrangement is as warm and rich as a heated blanket. (CS) ★★★★

This Sceptered Isle Works by Wood, Holst, Vaughan Williams and Elgar
Park Avenue Chamber Symphony *Recursive Classics RC5946217*

Admittedly, much of the playing here tends towards the rough and ready – the tuning in moments of the *Enigma Variations*, in particular, has a mind of its own – but the rarely recorded *Mannin Veen* by Haydn Wood is nonetheless a very welcome discovery. (JP) ★★

***Reviewers:** Michael Beek (MB), Rebecca Franks (RF), Jeremy Pound (JP), Charlotte Smith (CS)*

The month in box-sets

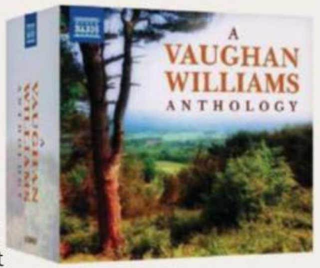


GETTY

Tango trio: Three classic Piazzolla albums are released together for the first time

A hoard of Vaughan Williams gems

Our round-up also includes Piazzolla and Mitropoulos collections



Dimitri Mitropoulos was a legendary figure in both European and American music-making, and Sony's massive ***Complete Recordings for RCA and Columbia*** *(Sony Classical 19439888252)* is the definitive statement on the conductor's vast recorded legacy. Presented across 69 discs are his greatest recordings, made with the New York Philharmonic and the Minneapolis Symphony (now the Minnesota Orchestra), plus his complete set of opera recordings at The Met. Exhaustive, thrilling and illuminating, Sony has really triumphed.

> Sony's Mitropoulos set is exhaustive, thrilling and illuminating

It's a big year for Vaughan Williams, whose 150th anniversary is being celebrated with numerous releases. ***A Vaughan Williams Anthology*** *(Naxos 8.508021)* is a specially curated collection of the very best the Naxos catalogue has to offer by the composer. Its eight discs feature recordings from as recent as 2015 and as far back as 1993, including four symphonies peformed by the Bournemouth Symphony and chamber works from the Maggini Quartet. Jennifer Pike plays *The Lark Ascending*, just one of the high points to be found in this treasurable set.

The Hallé Orchestra continues the celebration with ***The Complete Symphonies*** *(Hallé CD HLD 7557)*. This high-quality, five-disc collection is released in early June, following the end of the orchestra's three-month VW festival with the BBC Philharmonic in Manchester. It brings together its acclaimed recordings from 2010-21 of all nine symphonies, conducted by Mark Elder at the city's Bridgewater Hall, Hallé St Peter's and the BBC's studio in Salford.

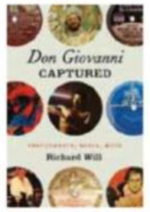
Coming hot on the heels of another big composer anniversary, ***Astor Piazzolla – The American Clavé Recordings*** *(Nonesuch 75597915280)* brings three classic album recordings together for the first time, marking the composer's 101st anniversary. Recorded in the 1980s with his New Tango Quintet, *Tango: Zero Hour*, *La Camorra* and *The Rough Dancer and the Cyclical Night* really established the Argentinian composer in the US, and offer up some truly superlative performances.

Books

Our critics cast their eyes over this month's selection of books on classical music

Don Giovanni Captured – Performance, Media, Myth
Richard Will
Chicago 312pp (hb) £36

Numerous books have been written about Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni*, but Richard Will's volume is a new undertaking. Its focus is on recordings of the work – not just as a kind of 'best recommendations' exploration of what is a substantial discography and videography, but to back up his discussions of how performance of the opera has altered during the period of recording itself.

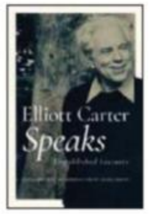


The evidence he considers starts from roughly 1900 in terms of sound extracts; from 1936, the year an early Glyndebourne production was set down in the studio, it encompasses complete recordings; then video evidence begins from the earliest film when Paul Czinner turned his cameras on Herbert Graf's 1954 Salzburg Festival staging conducted by Wilhelm Furtwängler.

But in fact Will reviews successive interpretations of the work, its action and characters more widely even than this, exploring texts from ETA Hoffmann, Søren Kierkegaard and a host of other critics and commentators from the early 19th century to the present day, along with their changing views of aspects of the piece. The result is detailed and observant, and one doesn't have to agree with every finding to be constantly stimulated by its ideas. *George Hall* ★★★★

Elliott Carter Speaks – Unpublished Lectures
Elliot Carter, Laura Emmery
Illinois University Press 240pp (hb) £44

Note the title. This is Elliott Carter speaking, not writing: a distinction that quickly becomes obvious as readers wade through the opening pages of unchiselled sentences and general observations, transcribed from reel-to-reel tapes of lectures that America's veteran modernist composer gave during July 1967 at the University of Minnesota. He was speaking partly from notes, partly impromptu, with ancillary help from chalked-up diagrams, audio excerpts and piano illustrations.



If his student audience laughed at a comment, the editor inserts '[Laughter]'. Nice to know (Carter indeed had a twinkling mind), but it's not enough to make the text sparkle on the page.

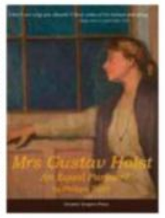
What does help is when Carter gets down to specifics, with details about other composers, his own development and the crystalline complications of selected works, particularly his Piano Concerto. Mozart's quick-changing textures are praised, so are Debussy's 'new kinds of sound'. Ives and Varèse are saluted, while Cage is given the boot, along with the 1960s fashion for aleatoric practices. Specialist readers at least will be comforted by the book's frequent inclusion of music quotations, some of them pages long. *Geoff Brown* ★★★

A complementary couple: Gustav and Isobel Holst in Ann Arbor, Michigan 1923

ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC/ARENA PAL

Mrs Gustav Holst – An Equal Partner?
Philippa Tudor
Circaidy Gregory Press 140pp (pb) £14.99

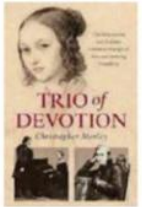
Isobel Harrison's impact on the young, love-starved Gustav Holst, her future husband, was touchingly described by their daughter Imogen in the composer's biography. But then Isobel disappears from Imogen's narrative, and indeed scarcely appears in most Holst literature. Here, now, is her story meticulously researched and presented in Philippa Tudor's highly readable biography.



If Isobel was not so musically literate as, for instance, Alice Elgar, she nonetheless comes across as forthright (indeed, often blunt), warm-hearted and down to earth – qualities which usefully counterbalanced her more cerebral husband. She played a crucial role in assisting Holst with business arrangements, not least in 1924 when he had his nervous breakdown. Sadly, they became rather less close over time – Isobel made no secret of her dismay over *Egdon Heath* and her wish Holst would 'get back to his old style' – and Holst found greater solace and understanding from friends such as Vaughan Williams. Still, their surviving correspondence (a good deal of it published for the first time) makes clear Gustav respected and solicited Isobel's opinion on practical matters, and their devotion remained through to his untimely death. *Daniel Jaffé* ★★★★★

Trio of Devotion
Christopher Morley
Brewin Books 62pp (pb) £6.95

Composers' love lives are a hot topic for music writers: Jessica Duchen recently explored the identity of Beethoven's beloved (*Immortal*), Mary Despenser imagined the relationship between Maurice Ravel and Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette (*Au Fou Indeed*), and now Christopher Morley focuses on the not-quite *ménage à trois* between the Schumanns and Brahms.



Trio of Devotion is a semi-fictionalised account of Clara and Robert's relationship, and the impact of their one-time protégé. Historical context is Morley's strongpoint, but this slim volume is let down by the bedroom encounters between our musical heroes that turn a promising premise into fan fiction. Descriptions such as 'Their mouths joined in a kiss which lasted for all eternity... Robert leaned over towards her, perhaps a little rough in his impatience to possess her, but Clara was ecstatically oblivious,' are worthy of *Literary Review's* Bad Sex in Fiction Award. Brahms's inability to 'perform' is also included in cringe-worthy detail.

However, with proceeds from the book going to the Gwyn Williams Bursary Fund to support young violists, let us simply consider it a guilty pleasure. *Claire Jackson* ★★

Audio

Our expert *Chris Haslam* gives valuable advice on buying and using your hi-fi

How to enjoy the best in alfresco audio quality

We recommend...

Klipsch PRO-500T £570

Think of this as a surround sound for your shrubbery. This high-end wired landscape speaker offers class-leading audio from a five-inch woofer and one-inch aluminium dome tweeter, and can even be paired with a subwoofer that you literally bury underground. **premiumSound.co.uk**

Escape P6-BT £599

A refined 55cm-tall Bluetooth speaker designed for outside fun, with two three-inch full-range drivers, a six-inch subwoofer and 60W amp, all powered by a battery that will last all night. Two speakers can even be paired for the finest stereo barbecues. **escapespeakers.com**

Audio Pro A15 £350

A delightful design from the consistently impressive Audio Pro, the A15 can extend your home's multi-room audio into the garden by using Airplay 2, Google Cast and Audio Pro's own software, while the battery will last up to 11 hours too. **audiopro.com**

Outdoor play area: Polk Audio's Atrium speakers ensure crystal-clear details

Summertime is on the way, with the promise of long balmy evenings. And however you enjoy your outside space, there's a music system to suit.

Bluetooth and battery technology has improved so much lately that for those of us who stream music, a portable wireless speaker is ideal for the garden. Brands such as JBL, Bose and Bang & Olufsen have a great selection of battery-powered weatherproof speakers that take up little space but still sound impressive. Lithe Audio even has a range of Bluetooth speakers disguised as rocks.

Look for portable designs with at least ten-hour battery life and ideally Bluetooth 5.0, which offers 120 metre range compared to just 30 metres from Bluetooth 4.2 – the extra range means you can potentially stream from Hi-Fi inside, rather than relying on your smartphone. While Sonos sells a couple of portable speakers, it also has architectural outdoor speakers that add your garden to a multi-room setup, though you may need to boost your Wi-Fi signal to take full advantage.

What if you don't stream music? The days of the portable CD player are over, but with a little planning you can bring your existing hi-fi into the sunshine. Wall-mounted outdoor speakers – try Polk Audio's Atrium range and Bowers & Wilkins's sublime AM-1 speaker – require wiring, but are impervious to the weather and have been tuned to work in wide-open spaces, so the detail in your music isn't simply lost to the environment. If you have a large garden and distant or understanding neighbours, you can extend your sound system to all corners using in-ground speakers, mounted on spikes, or those disguised as rocks, both available from Klipsch (see left) and Sevenoaks Sound and Vision. Installation isn't difficult and the results can be wonderful, but cables do need to be well buried to avoid the mower or being accidentally dug up.

> With a little planning you can bring your hi-fi into the sunshine

Quality outdoor speakers cost from £200 each, but increase your budget for better sound and longevity. Be aware that speakers designed for alfresco use are rigorously tested against moisture, dirt and temperature fluctuations, but for occasional garden speakers, check the IP (Ingress Protection) rating. These two numbers indicate the speaker's ability to keep out dust (first number) and water (second digit), so an IPX4 speaker hasn't been rated for dust but is splashproof, IPX7 can survive a shower, IP66 is completely dust-tight and hose proof, and IP68 can be submerged for 30 minutes.

Jazz

Barry Witherden's selection this month ranges from ferociously lively to chilled

JAZZ CHOICE

Old church, new style

The Maridalen trio cast their spell in subtle and artful accounts of a variety of new pieces

Norwegian roots: Hefre, Vemøy and Haga draw on their tradition

Maridalen

Bortenfor

Anders Hefre (saxophones, clarinet), Jonas Kilmork Vemøy (trumpet), Andreas Rødland Haga (double bass), Aleksander Sjølie (piano), Emil Brattested (pedal steel guitar)

Jazzland Recordings 377 9540

It's not easy keeping up with all the superb improvised and experimental music that comes out of Norway. Here now is the second album by Maridalen. The core trio of Hefre, Vemøy and Haga makes a gloriously rich sound on its own, but for this session (again recorded in the old wooden church at Maridalen, north of Oslo) they are augmented here and there by guests Sjølie and Brattested, and voices (presumably their own, overdubbed). Composing duties are fairly evenly shared between the regular trio members, with pieces ranging from all-enfolding, almost neo-Romantic themes to jaunty tunes given emotional weight by the solos.

Bortenfor incorporates subtle, well-integrated echoes of traditional music. There is a gratifying grace and elegance to many of the melodic lines. Vemøy's burnished tone and Hefre's big but husky sound create spellbinding sonorities, flawlessly underpinned by Haga's gorgeous bowed and pizzicato work. With such thoughtful, sensitive performances, you may not feel the need for translations of the Norwegian titles. ★★★★★

JØRGEN NORDBY, GETTY

June round-up

In Common III features a fine band fronted by saxophonist ***Walter Smith III*** and guitarist ***Matthew Stevens***. It's the third episode of the *In Common* strand but Smith wants the three albums to be approached as stand-alone programmes. The illustrious rhythm-section (pianist Kris Davis, bassist Dave Holland and drummer Terri Lyne Carrington) is new to the project but gels superbly. Spontaneous, improvised pieces are paired with composed tunes, the two elements dovetailing effectively. The textures that the members of the group produce, both on their own account and as contributions to the band's collective sound, are as beautiful and satisfying as their melodic and harmonic ideas are beguiling. *(Whirlwind Recordings WR 4783)* ★★★★★

Be Am by Norwegian pianist ***Bugge Wesseltoft***, opens with a sequence of gently anthemic tracks so subtly beautiful that you wonder whether the rest of the album will disappoint. It doesn't. Mostly a solo recital, except on 'Roads' and 'Emerging' which feature tenor saxophonist Håkon Kornstad, the music never loses its intensely personal character. Wesseltoft's penchant for electronics is held back until around three-quarters through, when looped recordings of birdsong are subtly introduced on 'Life', and Wesseltoft switches to electric piano alongside the evocative sound of the African kalimba. In these troubled times the music on this album is balm for the soul without ever sounding trite or complacent. *(Jazzland Recordings 377 9432)* ★★★★★

Port of Saints is the third collaboration between saxophonists ***Ron Caines*** and ***Martin Archer*** and the ***Axis*** ensemble. Caines is in the spotlight most of the time while the environment transforms around him: densely-textured ensembles jostle evocations of blues, New Orleans processions (with richly-coloured harmonies from the reeds and brass) and a touch of calypso, and fugitive snatches of melody rise to the surface: one phrase seems to evoke a ghostly visitation from Richard Rodgers's 'If I Loved You'. Mostly, though, it's free and fairly abstract (including some splendidly ferocious baritone sax) building to an intense climax with 'Endgame'. *(Discus 128CD)* ★★★★

For ***Lifted***, ***Trombone Shorty*** asked the performers to cut loose and play as if on stage. The album certainly has an immediacy that bespeaks spontaneity. Maybe fringe from a jazz perspective, but it's funky, feisty, phat and often fun (which is fine with me) and the heritage of New Orleans street music and R&B is in its blood. 'Everybody in the World' especially evokes the dancing 'second line' of a street parade. The whole shebang is driven by a ferocious pile-driving rhythm section and powerful horns, and there are some soulful vocals, not least Lauren Daigle on 'What It Takes'. *(Blue Note 3879691)* ★★★★

Saxophonist ***Trish Clowes*** has received many awards, honours and appointments, but custom has it that you are only as good as your next project. Clowes's reputation and standing is safe with ***A View With a Room*** where she again fronts her talented band My Iris in a programme of varied compositions, all but one of which she wrote for livestream events during the pandemic. With her astringent tone and flexible take on harmony she delivers stimulating explorations of pieces ranging from the bustling angularity of 'The Ness', via the lithe funk of 'Amber' to the reserved melancholy of 'Ayana'. *(Greenleaf GRE-CD-1094)* ★★★★

TAKE FIVE

An interview with today's finest jazz musicians

A great British export: Alan Skidmore has wowed the Germans

This month: Alan Skidmore

Guided by his father, the saxophonist Jimmy Skidmore – 'Skid' – went professional in his teens, playing with British blues-boom pioneers Alexis Korner and John Mayall. Like several of his generation he was more appreciated in Europe, and worked with big-bands attached to German radio stations, though in the UK he was noticed as part of Mike Westbrook's critically acclaimed Concert Band. Among many projects and associations, his award-winning quintet of the late-'60s, the all-saxophone trio SOS (with Mike Osborne and John Surman) and a stint with legendary drummer Elvin Jones's Jazz Machine were significant highlights.

During his career there have been several radical developments in jazz and a diversification into many sub-genres. Does he feel there is still a 'Grand Tradition'? 'I do,' he says, 'if you take into account the huge legacy left by the likes of Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins, Charlie Parker, Dexter Gordon, Sonny Rollins and John Coltrane etc, which is evidenced in all jazz today. The saxophone players I most admire in the UK include Paul Dunmall and Nat Birchall, both greatly influenced by Coltrane. Michael Brecker, himself very influenced by Coltrane, has had a big impact on recent generations of players.

'John Coltrane's playing inspires me to produce music that audiences respond to'

'It's the spiritual side of Coltrane's music, and the sound he produced, which has affected me most. Playing many of his compositions from different periods of his life has been an emotional and intense experience. His playing inspires me to produce music that audiences respond to and enjoy.'

Does he share Coltrane's obsessive practice regime? 'When I first picked up the saxophone I practised six hours a day, playing long notes and scales, with the help of my father. Nowadays I practise a little, just enough to keep my "chops" in shape.'

Now 80, together with record producer Mark Wastell, Skid is collating material for a special project with which to celebrate the occasion. 'Working with Mark, someone I have a great deal of respect for, is a joy,' he says. ***Barry Witherden***

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Live choice

Paul Riley picks the month's best concert and opera highlights in the UK

Resurrection soprano: Mari Eriksmoen sings Mahler Symphony No. 2 in the Royal Festival Hall

ASTRID WALLER

Opera North
Grand Theatre, Leeds, 1 June
Web: *operanorth.co.uk*
Opera North's erstwhile music director Richard Farnes consolidated his Wagnerian credentials with a concert performance *Ring Cycle*, forged over several years and finally assembled in 2016. Now his attention turns to Wagner's operatic swansong: *Parsifal*. Toby Spence takes the title role, with Katarina Karnéus as Kundry.

Dunedin Consort
Platform, Glasgow, 1 June
Web: *dunedin-consort.org.uk*
'O tell me the truth about love' pleaded WH Auden, and in his *A Lover's Discourse* the philosopher Roland Barthes attempted to do just that. Excerpts from the book are spliced with madrigals by Monteverdi, Gesualdo and Marenzio, together with a new work by Pippa Murphy.

Ulster Orchestra
Ulster Hall, Belfast, 3 June
Web: *ulsterorchestra.org.uk*
Conductor Daniele Rustioni despatches a 'Postcard from the USA' to end the season. Michael Collins is the soloist in Copland's Clarinet Concerto, and from the razzmatazz of Bernstein's *West Side Story* to the Deep South of Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, there are stories to feed *Banner*, Jessie Montgomery's reflection on the US national anthem.

Oslo Philharmonic
Barbican, London, 3 June
Web: *barbican.org.uk*
Lise Davidsen ends her Barbican 'Artist Spotlight' role in style. The Norwegian soprano teams up with the Oslo Philharmonic under its Finnish chief conductor Klaus Mäkelä for Berg's *Seven Early Songs*, adroitly paired with the mighty *Adagio* from Mahler's unfinished Symphony No. 10. Sibelius's Symphony No. 5 has the last word.

Stile Antico
St George's, Bristol, 4 June
Web: *stgeorgesbristol.co.uk*
In a month-long festival devoted to the human voice, ranging from Barbara Strozzi in the 17th century to a new work by Edmund Finnis, Stile Antico probes the predicament of Catholic composers during the Reformation. Music by exiles such as Dowland and Dering partners 'remainers' including Byrd's *Quomodo cantabimus*.

English Haydn Festival
Bridgnorth, Shropshire, 7-11 June
Web: *englishhaydn.com*
'Haydn's Musical Innovations' is the theme for a festival that opens and closes with Platinum-Jubilee performances of John Bull's *God Save the Queen*. Under Steven Devine, the period instruments of The English Haydn Orchestra range over symphonies by Haydn, and Devine himself joins the Consone Quartet for the chamber reduction of Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 11.

Music Theatre Wales
Sherman Theatre, Cardiff, 8 June
Web: *musictheatre.wales*
Direct from the Aldeburgh Festival opening night, Tom Coult's opera *Violet* sets a libretto by Alice Birch about time, townsfolk and escape. Jude Christian directs the world premiere tour, with Anna Dennis as Violet. The London Sinfonietta is conducted by Andrew Gourlay.

Philharmonia Orchestra & Chorus
Royal Festival Hall, London, 8 June
Web: *southbankcentre.co.uk*
Both the Philharmonia and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra end their season with Mahler's epic 'Resurrection' Symphony. The Philharmonia's, with soprano Mari Eriksmoen, marks the climax of Santtu-Matias Rouvali's first season as principal conductor.

Grange Park Opera
West Horsley Place, Surrey, 9 June – 7 July
Web: *grangeparkopera.co.uk*
Half a century separates the premiere of Janáček's space-and-time-traveling opera *The Excursions of Mr Brouček* from its first performance in the UK. And UK performances remain relatively rare. Janáček afficionado David Pountney's new production stars Peter Hoare as the eponymous landlord dissatisfied with life. George Jackson conducts.

Musica Secreta
Kings Place, London, 10 June
Web: *kingsplace.co.uk*
The Virgin Mary is the focus of a programme that includes motets attributed to Lucrezia Borgia's daughter Leonora. Works by Dunstaple, Antoine Brumel and Maistre Jhan are woven through anonymous Marian tributes and a new setting of Esther Morgan by Joanna Marsh.

City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, 15, 16 June
Web: *cbso.co.uk*
Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla was to have bowed out as the orchestra's music director with Mahler's Symphony No. 2 and a collaboration with violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja. Ludovic Morlot takes over the dates with Kopatchinskaja, who performs Shostakovich's Violin Concerto No. 1 between Britten's *Gloriana Suite* and the Four Sea Interludes from *Peter Grimes*.

Fieri Consort & The City Musick
Jack Lyons Concert Hall, York, 15 June
Web: *yorkconcerts.co.uk*
Singers, dancers and an array of instruments including bandura, cittern, bagpipes and hurdy-gurdy present a 'Tudor Night' touching on the Court, theatre, masque and music for chambers great and small. There's music by Byrd and Gibbons, Morley and Wilbye, Holborne and Ferrabosco.

Manchester Collective
Lakeside Arts, Nottingham, 16 June
Web: *manchestercollective.co.uk*
Britten's *Les Illuminations* rounds off the Collective's year but, characteristically, there's something new: the premiere of a song cycle by Edmund Finnis. Add in Barbara Strozzi's aria *Che si può fare* and soprano Ruby Hughes's only respite is Olli Mustonen's Nonet No. 2.

Hard Rain Ensemble
Sonic Arts Research Centre, Belfast, 17 June
Web: *hardrainensemble.com*
Queen's University Belfast's resident ensemble teams up with Maiden Voyage Dance for a cross-genre exploration of Schoenberg's Chamber Symphony No. 1 in Webern's quintet arrangement. Plus, music by Piers Hellawell, Jane O'Leary and Anita Mawhinney.

The Rameau Project
All Saints' Church, Boughton Aluph, 18 June
Web: *stourmusic.org.uk*
Rory Carver and Jack Lawrence-Jones are the heavenly twins as The Opera Company and scholar-conductor Jonathan Williams's The Rameau Project collaborate on the UK premiere of a new edition of the French composer's 1737 hit *Castor et Pollux*. A one-hour chamber version leaves room for a little late-night Bach from The Swingle Singers.

London Symphony Orchestra
St Paul's Cathedral, London, 23 June
Web: *lso.co.uk*
The LSO is on the move! A St Paul's Cathedral Gala begins with Sir Simon Rattle and the musicians in Paternoster Square before a procession that remembers the original al fresco intentions of Berlioz's gargantuan *Grande symphonie funèbre et triomphale*, to be performed alongside Messiaen's glittering *Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum*.

ANDY HOLDSWORTH

Celebrating Oliver Knussen
Snape Maltings, 24 June
Web: *brittenpearsarts.org*
Across a single day, five concerts remember the late composer-conductor. A clutch of premieres includes works by Helen Grime, Kaija Saariaho and Ryan Wigglesworth, who also conducts the concluding concert by the BBC Symphony Orchestra in which Knussen's *Cleveland Pictures* receives its first performance.

Up Close and Musical
Fidelio Orchestra Café, London, 24 & 25 June
Web: *upcloseandmusical.com*
Violist Shiry Rashkovsky's intimate festival returns to Clerkenwell's café-cum-recital-space. Pianist Clare Hammond includes a Sonatina by Doreen Carwithen, and Trio Klein proposes an '80's Night with a difference – John Adams and Alfred Schnittke go head-to-head with Duran Duran and Meredith Monk.

Welsh National Opera
Millennium Centre, Cardiff, 29 June – 2 July
Web: *wno.org.uk*
Will Todd's new opera *Migrations* explores what it is to be uprooted in six parallel storylines ranging from the voyage of The Mayflower to the migratory experience of birds. Directed by David Pountney, under conductor Matthew Kofi Waldren a gospel choir, Bollywood dancers and a children's choir swell the ranks. (See 'Backstage with…', right.)

Elias String Quartet
Kilrenny Church, Fife, 29 June
Web: *eastneukfestival.com*
In the first of two appearances, the Elias Quartet acknowledge their hosts, wrapping two Scottish works around the fifth of Haydn's Op. 33 string quartets: James MacMillan's *Memento*, suffused with Gaelic lament and psalm-singing, plus *Reed Stanzas*, Sally Beamish's love-letter to the fiddle tradition and the pibroch.

BACKSTAGE WITH…
Composer Will Todd

Story teller: Will Todd weaves six narratives into one opera

The subject matter of *Migrations*, your new opera for Welsh National Opera, is a particularly pertinent one at present…
Yes! It was in fact originally commissioned to coincide with the 400th anniversary of *The Mayflower* sailing over to the New World in 1620 – because a number of the places that WNO tours to are port cities and towns, the company felt it could extend the subject matter to a wider look at migration. But following the delays caused by the pandemic, migration is now even more topical than it was two years ago.

Can you describe the opera for us?
It's a massive piece that combines and weaves together six narratives. As well as the strand involving the Pilgrim Fathers, we also have migrating birds, Syrian and Eritrean refugees in the present day, Indian doctors coming to work in the NHS in the late 1960s, a Cree Indian story set both in the 19th century and in the modern day, and a true story about a Caribbean house slave in Bristol in the 18th century and his attempts to escape.

That is quite a wide range of subjects for a librettist to take on board, isn't it?
There are in fact six different writers who worked on the libretto! We started the process by literally sitting in a room together – it could seem like quite a hard way to write an opera, but what was so powerful was the passion that each of those indivuals had for writing their part of the story. And what I think makes the theme work so well is that with migration, there's always that duality between going forwards for a positive reason but also that sense of having left something behind.

And to match such a wide range of narratives, do you also feature a varied array of musical styles?
Most of the segments tend to default towards operatic music, though there is a standalone section involving Bollywood music. For this, I collaborated with the sitar player and composer Jasdeep Singh Degun, which I found a great help. There is also music for gospel choir, but that is something I already have a lot of experience of from my jazz and blues compositions. There was, though, a requirement for the music to have lot of different feels to it – if the music sounds samey when you move from one storyline to the next, you can risk losing those stories' sense of identity.

TV&Radio

Your comprehensive guide to what's on BBC Radio 3 this month

JUNE'S RADIO 3 LISTINGS

Schedules may be subject to alteration. For up-to-date listings see Radio Times

Three to look out for

Alan Davey, the controller of BBC Radio 3, picks out three great moments to tune into this June

Walton's Cello Concerto

Rising cellist Laura van der Heijden joins the BBC National Orchestra of Wales live at Snape Maltings to revisit Walton's captivating Cello Concerto – the piece which won her the BBC Young Musician title in 2012. We'll also be treated to Elizabeth Maconchy's coronation tone poem, *Proud Thames*, and Shostakovich's Symphony No. 10.
Radio 3 in Concert: 16 June, 7.30pm

Celebrating Belinda Sykes

Hannah French celebrates the extraordinary musician Belinda Sykes, the vibrant leader of medieval folk ensemble Joglaresa who died last year. We'll hear tributes from her colleagues and collaborators, and landmark recordings from across her boundary-breaking career.
Early Music Show: 19 June, 2pm

Music and meditation

Singer-songwriter Nao and her guests present a series of themed guided meditations underscored by a flowing classical mix. Each episode features exclusive commissions from young composers.
The Music and Meditation Podcast: Sundays, 12am and on BBC Sounds

1 WEDNESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Handel and the Crown
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-4pm Afternoon Concert
4-5pm Choral Evensong
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from Bridgewater Hall, Manchester. Bach, arr Webern *Ricercar a 6*, Strauss *Suite on Harpsichord Pieces by Couperin*, Haydn *Harmoniemesse*. BBC Philharmonic/Omer Meir Wellber
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
11pm-12.30am Night Tracks

2 THURSDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Handel and the Crown
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from Liverpool Philharmonic Hall. Mahler *Symphony No. 5*, Victoria Borisova-Ollas *Remember Me Giselle: Cello Concerto*. Truls Mørk (cello), Royal Liverpool Philharmonic/Vasily Petrenko
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
11-11.30pm Night Tracks Mix
11.30pm-12.30am Unclassified with Elizabeth Alker

3 FRIDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Handel and the Crown
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from Hall for Cornwall, Truro. Vaughan Williams *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*, Dvořák *The Water Goblin*, Graham Fitkin *Metal*, Elgar *Enigma Variations*. BBC National Orchestra of Wales/Angus Webster
10-10.45pm The Verb
10.45-11pm The Essay
11pm-1am Late Junction

4 SATURDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9-11.45am Record Review Building a Library: Britten's *Four Sea Interludes*
11.45am-12.30pm Music Matters
12.30-1pm This Classical Life
1-3pm Inside Music
3-4pm Sound of Cinema
4-5pm Music Planet
5-6.30pm J to Z
6.30-10pm Opera on 3. Live from Metropolitan Opera, New York. Brett Dean *Hamlet*.
10pm-12 midnight New Music Show
12-1am Freeness

5 SUNDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Sunday Morning
12 noon-1pm Private Passions Anne Glenconner
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-3pm The Early Music Show
3-4pm Choral Evensong
4-5pm Jazz Record Requests
5-5.30pm The Listening Service
5.30-6.45pm Words and Music
6.45-7.30pm Sunday Feature Afterwords: Chinua Achebe
7.30-9pm Drama on 3
9-11pm Record Review Extra
11pm-12am Sunday Night Series
BBC RADIO 3 **CHOICE 12-12.30am The Music and Meditation Podcast**

6 MONDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Holmes and Duparc
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-4.30pm Afternoon Concert
4.30-5pm New Generation Artists
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert
10-10.45pm Music Matters
10.45-11pm The Essay
11pm-12.30am Night Tracks

7 TUESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Holmes and Duparc rpt
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from St David's Cathedral, Pembrokeshire. Britten *Courtly Dances from Gloriana*, Beethoven *Piano Concerto No. 3*, Alex Mills *Landsker*. Stewart Goodyear (piano), BBC NOW/Ryan Bancroft.
10-10.45pm Music Matters
10.45-11pm The Essay
11pm-12.30am Night Tracks

A month of highlights: Laura van der Heijden plays Walton; (right) tributes to Belinda Sykes; (bottom right) meditation with Nao

OLIVIA DACOSTA, GRAHAM WOOD

8 WEDNESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Holmes and Duparc
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-4pm Afternoon Concert
4-5pm Choral Evensong
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert live from Royal Festival Hall, London. Mahler *Symphony No. 2*. Philharmonia/Santtu-Matias Rouvali
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
11pm-12.30am Night Tracks

9 THURSDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Holmes and Duparc
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
11-11.30pm Night Tracks Mix
11.30pm-12.30am Unclassified with Elizabeth Alker

10 FRIDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Holmes and Duparc
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.45pm In Tune Mixtape
7.45-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from Bridgewater Hall, Manchester. Alissa Firsova *Die Windsbraut*, Elgar *Sea Pictures*, Mahler *Symphony No. 1*. Jess Dandy (mezzo-soprano), BBC Philharmonic/Gemma New
10-10.45pm The Verb
10.45-11pm The Essay
11pm-1am Late Junction
2am-3pm Gameplay

11 SATURDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9-11.45am Record Review Building a Library – Debussy's *La Mer* with Flora Willson
11.45am-12.30pm Music Matters
12.30-1pm This Classical Life
1-3pm Inside Music
3-4pm Sound of Cinema
4-5pm Music Planet
5-6.30pm J to Z
6.30-10pm Opera on 3 LIVE from Metropolitan Opera. Stravinsky *The Rake's Progress*
10pm-12 midnight New Music Show
12-1am Freeness

12 SUNDAY

7-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Sunday Morning
12 noon-1pm Private Passions
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-3pm The Early Music Show
3-4pm Choral Evensong
4-5pm Jazz Record Requests
5-5.30pm The Listening Service
5.30-6.45pm Words and Music
6.45-7.30pm Sunday Feature Afterwords: Muriel Spark
7.30-9pm Drama on 3
9-11pm Record Review Extra
11pm-12am Sunday Night Series
BBC RADIO 3 **CHOICE 12-12.30am The Music and Meditation Podcast**

13 MONDAY

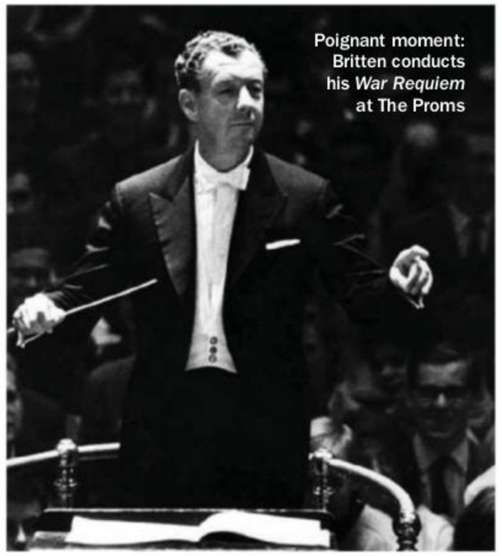
6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon | Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Dvořák
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-4.30pm Afternoon Concert
4.30-5pm New Generation Artists
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert
10-10.45pm Music Matters
10.45-11pm The Essay
11pm-12.30am Night Tracks

14 TUESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Dvořák
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7.00pm In Tune
7-10pm Radio 3 in Concert live from Aldeburgh Festival at Snape Maltings. 'A Garland for the Queen': a collection of short works by composers including Tippett, Howells and Vaughan Williams for the Coronation. BBC Singers/Owain Park
10-10.45pm Music Matters
10.45-11pm The Essay
11pm-12.30am Night Tracks

15 WEDNESDAY

6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Dvořák
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-4pm Afternoon Concert
4-5pm Choral Evensong
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from the Sage Gateshead. Haydn *Symphony No. 103 'Drumroll'*, *Set of English Canzonettas*, *String Quartet Op. 76 No. 5*, *March for the Prince of Wales*, *Symphony No. 101 'Clock'*. Royal Northern Sinfonia/Roger Norrington.
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
11pm-12.30am Night Tracks



Poignant moment: Britten conducts his *War Requiem* at The Proms

TV HIGHLIGHTS
Britten's War Requiem

Sixty years since its premiere, Britten's *War Requiem* remains as poignant in 2022 as it did in the wake of the Second World War. Commissioned for the re-consecration of the rebuilt Coventry Cathedral, his hauntingly beautiful work for choir and orchestra takes Wilfred Owen's great war poems as its inspiration, and reflects Britten's position as a pacifist and conscientious objector. Its first performance in 1962 was such a landmark event that thousands tuned in for the broadcast. In 1964, it was televised at the Proms, and this rare archive performance has been re-mastered and released by the BBC – an opportunity to witness the creative forces behind this epic work. Britten himself conducts the Melos Ensemble, and performers include Heather Harper (soprano), Peter Pears (tenor) and Thomas Hemsley (baritone). Also featured are the BBC Chorus, London Philharmonic Choir and BBC Symphony Orchestra.
Available now on BBC iPlayer

16 THURSDAY
6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Dvořák
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
CHOICE 7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert live from Aldeburgh Festival at Snape Maltings. Maconchy *Proud Thames*, Walton *Cello Concerto*, Shostakovich *Symphony No. 10*. Laura van der Heijden (cello), BBC NOW/Martyn Brabbins
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
11-11.30pm Night Tracks
11.30pm-12.30am Unclassified with Elizabeth Alker

17 FRIDAY
6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Dvořák
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert live from Aldeburgh Festival at Snape Maltings. Britten *A Time There Was*, Grace Williams *Sea Sketches*, Gavin Higgins *Faerie Bride (world premiere)*. Roderick Williams (baritone), Marta Fontanals-Simmons (mezzo-soprano), BBC National Orchestra of Wales/Martyn Brabbins
10-10.45pm The Verb
10.45-11pm The Essay
11pm-1am Late Junction

18 SATURDAY
7-9am Breakfast
9-11.45am Record Review Building a Library - Haydn's Operas with Roger Parker
11.45am-12.30pm Music Matters
12.30-1pm This Classical Life
1-3pm Inside Music
3-4pm Sound of Cinema
4-5pm Music Planet
5-6.30pm J to Z
6.30-10pm Opera on 3 from English National Opera. Janáček *The Cunning Little Vixen*
10pm-12 midnight New Music Show
12-1am Freeness
1-7am Through the Night

19 SUNDAY
7-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Sunday Morning
12 noon-1pm Private Passions Katherine Rundell
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
CHOICE 2-3pm The Early Music Show Celebrating Belinda Sykes
3-4.30pm Choral Evensong
4.30-5.30pm Jazz Record Requests
5.30-6.45pm Words and Music
6.45-7.30pm Sunday Feature Afterwords: Thich Nhat Hanh
7.30-9pm Drama on 3 *Tales from the 17ème Arrondissement* by Maupassant, adapted by Simon Scardifield
9-11pm Record Review Extra
11pm-12am Sunday Night Series
CHOICE 12-12.30am The Music and Meditation Podcast

20 MONDAY
6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Victoria

Manchester magic: Kerem Hasan conducts the BBC Philharmonic at Bridgewater Hall

1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-4.30 Afternoon Concert
4.30-5pm New Generation Artists
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert
10-10.45pm Music Matters
10.45-11pm The Essay Moments of Being
11pm-12.30am Night Tracks

21 TUESDAY
6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Victoria
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7.30pm In Tune plus Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from Aldeburgh Festival at Snape Maltings. Anna Thorvaldsdottir *Catamorphosis*, Shostakovich *Violin Concerto No. 2*, Britten *Four Sea Interludes*, Britten *Suite from Gloriana*. Patricia Kopatchinskaja (violin), City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra/Ludovic Morlot
10-10.45pm Music Matters
10.45-11pm The Essay Moments of Being with essayist Joanna Robertson
11pm-12.30am Night Tracks

22 WEDNESDAY
6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Victoria
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-4pm Afternoon Concert
4-5pm Choral Evensong
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from Milton Court. Following the 17th century adventures of Nicholas Lanier, the first Master of the King's Music, with works by Dowland, Lanier, Monteverdi, Sweelinck. Academy of Ancient Music/Laurence Cummings.
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay Moments of Being with essayist Joanna Robertson
11pm-12.30am Night Tracks

23 THURSDAY
6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Victoria
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert New Generation Artists compilation from performances at Aldeburgh Festival
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay Moments of Being with essayist Joanna Robertson
11-11.30pm The Night Tracks Mix
11.30pm-12.30am Unclassified with Elizabeth Alker

24 FRIDAY
6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Victoria
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.00-10pm Radio 3 in Concert live from Aldeburgh Festival at Snape Maltings. Knussen *Cleveland Pictures*, *Horn Concerto*, Musorgsky orch. Ravel *Pictures at an Exhibition*, Musorgsky orch. Stokowski *A Night on Bare Mountain*. Martin Owen (horn), BBC Symphony Orchestra/Ryan Wigglesworth
10-10.45pm The Verb
10.45-11pm The Essay – Moments of Being with essayist Joanna Robertson
11pm-1am Late Junction

25 SATURDAY
7-9am Breakfast
9-11.45am Record Review Building a Library: Rachmaninov's *Symphony No 2* with Edward Seckerson
11.45am-12.30pm Music Matters
12.30-1pm This Classical Life
1-3pm Inside Music
3-4pm Sound of Cinema
4-5pm Music Planet
5-6.30pm J to Z
6.30-10pm Opera on 3 Royal Opera House. Saint-Saëns *Samson et Dalila*
10pm-12 midnight New Music Show
12-1am Freeness

26 SUNDAY
7-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Sunday Morning
12 noon-1pm Private Passions Christopher de Bellaigue
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-3pm The Early Music Show
3-4.30pm Choral Evensong
4.30-5.30pm Jazz Record Requests
5.30-6.45pm Words and Music
6.45-7.30pm Sunday Feature
7.30-9pm Drama on 3 *Camille* by Pam Gems/Satinder Chohan
9-11pm Record Review Extra
11pm-12am Sunday Night Series
CHOICE 12-12.30am The Music and Meditation Podcast

27 MONDAY
6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Billy Strayhorn
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7.30pm In Tune plus Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert
10-10.45pm Music Matters
10.45-11pm The Essay
11pm-12.30am Night Tracks

28 TUESDAY
6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Billy Strayhorn
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7.30pm In Tune plus Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from Bridgewater Hall. Programme to include Shostakovich *Symphony No. 10*, Florence Price *The Oak*, Gershwin *Piano Concerto*. BBC Philharmonic/Kerem Hasan
10-10.45pm Music Matters
10.45-11pm The Essay
11pm-12.30am Night Tracks

29 WEDNESDAY
6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Billy Strayhorn
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-4pm Afternoon Concert
4-5pm Choral Evensong
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert This Classical Life In Concert from Alexandra Palace with Jess Gillam and the BBC Concert Orchestra/Jonathan Bloxham
10-10.45pm Free Thinking
10.45-11pm The Essay
11pm-12.30am Night Tracks

30 THURSDAY
6.30-9am Breakfast
9am-12 noon Essential Classics
12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week Billy Strayhorn
1-2pm Lunchtime Concert
2-5pm Afternoon Concert
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm In Tune Mixtape
7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert from Barbican. London SO/Antonio Pappano
10-10.45pm The Verb
10.45-11pm The Essay
11pm-1am Late Junction

QUIZ ANSWERS from p104
1. *The Goldberg Variations*
2. Gustav Mahler
3. Jack the Ripper
4. Bela Bartók
5. Debussy's *La Mer*
6. Anna Netrebko
7. Three: *A Sea Symphony* (No. 1); *Pastoral Symphony* (No. 3); and *Sinfonia antartica* (No. 7)
8. It is the point at which Mozart died
9. At a comfortable pace
10. Hamlet (Tchaikovsky composed a *Hamlet* overture-fantasia; Thomas wrote an opera called *Hamlet*; Bach's Air on a G string was used as the music on British TV adverts for *Hamlet* cigars; *The Lion King's* plot is based on that of *Hamlet*)

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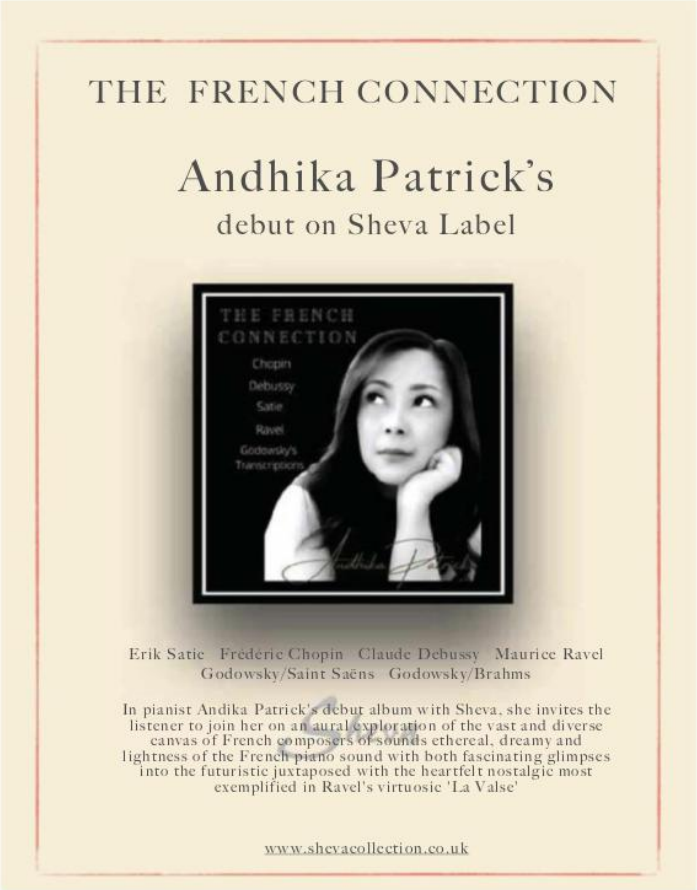
GETTY, MARCO BORGGREVE



THE QUIZ

It's time to put your classical music knowledge to the test...

1. First published in 1741, which keyboard work by JS Bach is said to have been composed to provide the insomniac Count Kaiserling with a little night-time entertainment?

2. Whom did the composer and writer Alma Schindler marry in 1902, having broken off her relationship with composer Alexander von Zemlinsky the year before?

3. Lulu, the eponymous heroine of Berg's opera set in late-19th-century Europe, is murdered by which notorious London criminal?

4. Who composed his Dance Suite for orchestra in 1923 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Buda and Pest becoming one city?

5. On the composer's insistence, the first published score of which 1905 orchestral work was illustrated with Hokusai's *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* (above)?

6. Which Russian soprano appeared at the Last Night of the Proms in 2007, performing Richard Strauss's *Morgen* with US violinist Joshua Bell?

7. How many of Vaughan Williams's symphonies include singers, as either soloists or a choir?

8. What is particularly significant about the eighth bar of the Lacrimosa movement of Mozart's Requiem in D minor?

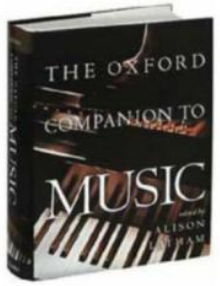
9. On a musical score, what does the Italian instruction *tempo comodo* mean?

10. Which Shakespeare play links the composers Tchaikovsky and Ambroise Thomas, Bach's *Air on a G string* and the musical film *The Lion King*?

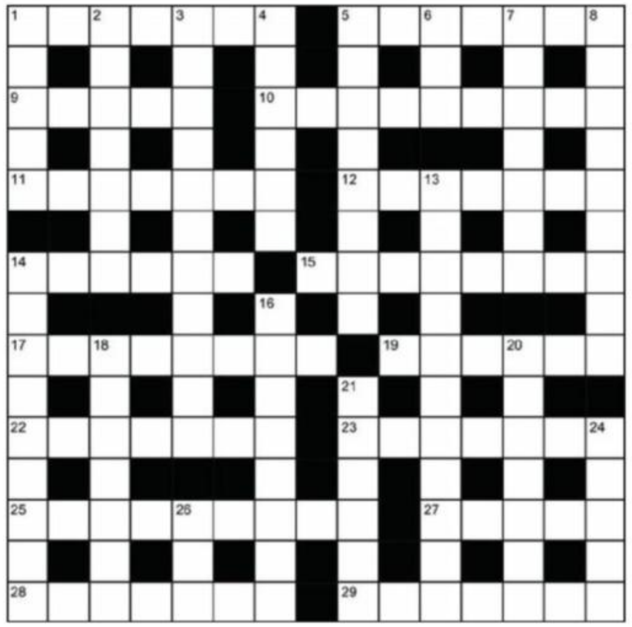
See p103 for answers

The *BBC Music Magazine* PRIZE CROSSWORD NO. 373

Crossword set by **Paul Henderson**



The first correct solution of our crossword picked at random will win a copy of **The Oxford Companion to Music.** A runner-up will win **Who Knew? Answers to Questions about Classical Music** (see oup.co.uk). Send answers to: *BBC Music Magazine*, Crossword 373/June 2022, PO Box 501, Leicester, LE94 0AA to arrive by 9 June 2022 (solution in Sep 2022 issue).



Your name & address

ACROSS

1 Newspaper backed country star in musicals (7)
5 What may film a couple of crotchets around beginning and end of cantata? (7)
9 Someone like James MacMillan seen in Berkshire town (5)
10 To sum up: New Zealand's behind neat arrangement of Liszt piece (9)
11 Composer's muse – ill repute, ending in disgrace (7)
12 A lot of legal action about American home of Mozart? (7)
14 Tenor, contralto, alto and soprano engaged in our performing (6)
15 Chaps in Florida company displaying Spanish dance (8)
17 I'd piano, old, brought in in perfect condition for the centre (8)
19/25 1a film with unusual muso element, is it? (4,2,2,2,5)
22 Slow movement with a new tempo (60% reduced) (7)
23 Where conductor stands – odd sort, very odd (7)
25 See 19 across
27 Broadcasting section of Hungarian oratorio in reverse order (2,3)
28 Clappers not backing visiting artist? Not entirely (7)
29 Family backed one school for German conductor (7)

DOWN

1 Slow piece presented around end of year (5)
2 Russian pianist, well-off, heads for the European region (7)
3 1a film? Brain's sorta frazzled (1,4,2,4)
4 Daughter with stringed instrument missing opening in a tizzy (6)
5 Musicians' Union to agree to involve University on a reciprocal basis (8)
6 Soeur Blanche in new article from Poulenc? (3)
7 Tea with a smile for British composer (7)
8 Ace move, arranging to include two finales from Stamitz at moderate volume (5,4)
13 Problem over rest performing in fake 1a film (6,5)
14 Rough sound of US violinist becoming percussionist? (9)
16 Picking up singular rock music, about to understand lively dances (5-3)
18 British composer to finish with academic about G&S (7)
20 Vocal apparatus that's limiting start and finish of *Rigoletto* (7)
21 Prayer book overlooked by US pop singer (6)
24 31 days to provide music for the army? (5)
26 Composer Harrison short of forte? (3)

MARCH SOLUTION
No. 370

MARCH WINNER
Richard Farr, Tunbridge Wells

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NEXT MONTH on sale from 14 June (UK)

The BBC Proms are here!

We celebrate both the start of the Proms season and the centenary of the BBC by taking a look at 100 famous Proms from over the decades

Sweet Serenade: Donald Runnicles conducts the BBC SSO

GETTY, MATTHEW CHATTLE/FUTURE PUBLISHING VIA GETTY

Vaughan Williams and Wagner
Serenade and Siegfried Idyll

Donald Runnicles conducts the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra

PLUS! We present full listings of the ***2022 BBC Proms*** season; violinist ***Gidon Kremer*** shares his thoughts with *Charlotte Smith*; *Andrew Green* takes a wander round the UK's best ***music museums***; *Ariane Todes* investigates the evolution of the ***sound of strings***; and *Elizabeth de Brito* explores the life and work of composer ***George Walker***

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Jan-Dec 2020 – 25,734

Music that changed me

Michelle Dockery

Actor

Michelle Dockery is best known for her longstanding role as Lady Mary Crawley in the ITV period drama *Downton Abbey*, which she has reprised for the show's subsequent films. A trained singer as well as a stage and screen actor, Dockery has performed with bands and as a solo artist on and off over the years. She has recently teamed up with fellow *Downton Abbey* actor Michael Fox to form a folk duo known as Michael and Michelle. Together, they released their debut EP, *The Watching Silence*, out now on Decca Records.

Having played Lady Mary, you'd think I'd be sick of *Downton Abbey*'s theme tune but I'm not, surprisingly. I even play it on the piano, which people find hilarious – they see it as me breaking into my own theme tune. The *Downton Abbey* composer JOHN LUNN is a complete genius –the way he creates a theme tune with such a recognisable hook absolutely fascinates me. As soon as the music begins, you can see the castle and the characters in your mind's eye.

Soundtracks have always been a big obsession for me, as I wanted to be an actor from a really young age. If a film really struck me, I always wanted to dive into its soundtrack. I had the double cassette of the soundtrack to Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet,* which featured all the tracks by various different artists as well as all the original music used in the background of the film written by Nellee Hooper, Craig Armstrong and Marius de Vries. Every time I listened to the soundtrack, it was as though I was in the film.

If I was ever on Radio 4's *Desert Island Discs,* my choices would be really eclectic. I grew up on Motown, but as I entered my teenage years I became more influenced by folk music. I was introduced to JONI MITCHELL when I was about 14 and learnt to play *River* on the piano. I still don't know if the chords were even correct. I

GETTY

The choices

John Lunn Downton Abbey
Chamber Orchestra of London/Alastair King
Decca 278 1146

Romeo + Juliet: Music from the Motion Picture Music by Nellee Hooper etc
Capitol Records CDP 72438 555672

Joni Mitchell River
Atlantic Records / Rhino 7599271992

Vaughan Williams
Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis
Britten Sinfonia/Nicholas Cleobury
Sony Essential Masterworks 88697707282

Vaughan Williams The Lark Ascending
Tasmin Little (violin), BBC Philharmonic/ Andrew Davis *Chandos CHAN 10796*

remember going to a restaurant and my family made me get up and play it on the piano there, which must have been such a funny image. There's something jarring about seeing someone so young singing such a mature song. I was a 14 year-old who hadn't learnt anything about life, but was singing a song like *River,* which is all about the complexities of a heart-breaking relationship. Joni Mitchell is someone that stays with you throughout the different stages of your entire life.

When I was younger, my sister and I were always harmonising to the music we heard. I think that's why Michael Fox and I have formed our new folk duo. I've always loved that kind of unison singing. It was around this time that Oasis influenced everything for me: how I dressed and who I hung out with. Their songs were some of the first I played on the guitar when I was going through an indie-grunge phase as a teenager. I went to a brilliant stage school when I was growing up and very nearly went down the musical theatre route. I auditioned for a few musicals but wasn't successful, which actually turned out to be pretty fortunate, because my career could have taken a very different direction. I was always much more disciplined as an actor than as a singer or dancer. That said, the music of *West Side Story, Les Misérables* and *Guys and Dolls* have always stayed with me, because I sang so many of those songs and learnt dance routines from them.

Classical music has always been part of my life. I remember first hearing VAUGHAN WILLIAMS's *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* when I was listening to Classic FM while studying for my GCSEs and was completely sucked in by it. If I'm learning lines for an acting role, I always turn to piano music to help me concentrate. The first thing I listen to in the morning and when I'm driving is Ludovico Einaudi. Music plays a big part in my acting career, and I often build and create playlists to help me tap into the character I'm portraying.

There are certain pieces of music that seem to represent the course of an entire life through their narrative. VAUGHAN WILLIAMS's *The Lark Ascending* is one such piece that I'll never tire of. It takes you through birth, adolescence and adulthood within the space of 15 minutes or so.
Interview by Freya Parr

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Igor Levit

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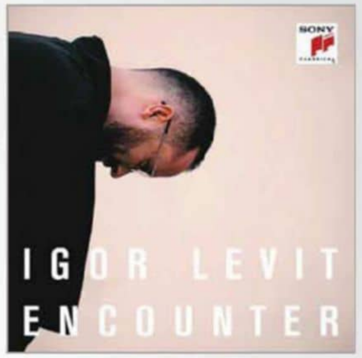

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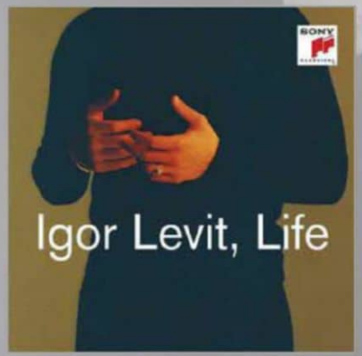

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The Independent

Beethoven: Complete Piano Sonatas
"...a superlative interpreter of Beethoven..."
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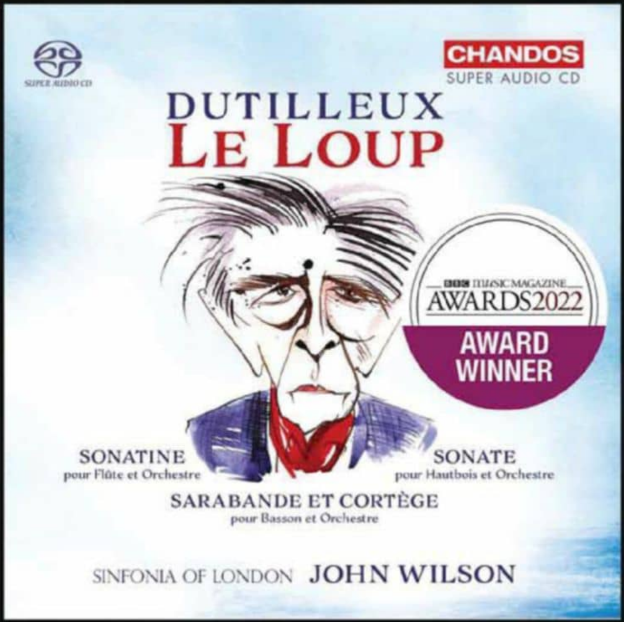
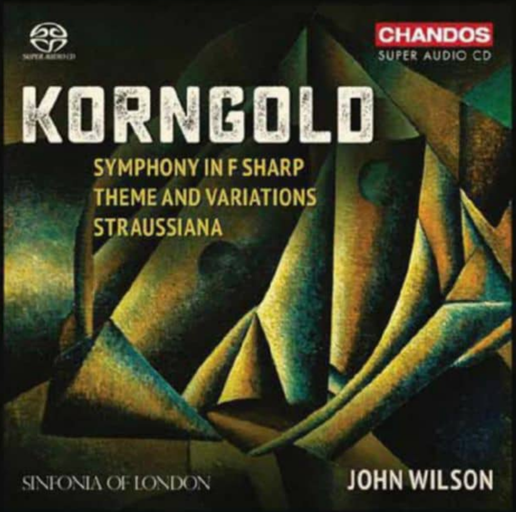


CHSA 5263

'Wilson seizes on the opportunities to bring out the vivid colours of Dutilleux's score, with the brass blazing superbly and every rhythm alive with meaning. No less striking is the music's lyricism' - *BBC Music Magazine*



CHSA 5220

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BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE AWARDS 2021

CHSA 5261

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